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FOUR FAMOUS NEW YORKERS

THE POLITICAL CAREERS OF
CLEVELAND, PLATT, HILL AND ROOSEVELT

Forming Volume Four of "The Political History of
the State of New York"
1882-1905

BY

DEALVA STANWOOD ALEXANDER, LL.D.

Former Member of Congress

Author of "The History and Procedure of the House of Representatives"



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PREFACE

It is an interesting coincidence that this book, which is a continuation of the three volumes heretofore published on "The Political History of the State of New York," deals almost exclusively with the political careers of Grover Cleveland, Thomas C. Platt, David B. Hill, and Theodore Roosevelt, who enjoyed nation-wide celebrity. When Roosevelt appeared, Platt had served two terms in Congress, and a few months in the United States Senate, while Cleveland and Hill had held office with credit in their respective counties; but the real political activities of these four famous New Yorkers practically commenced in 1883, when Cleveland and Roosevelt co-operated as the reform law-makers of the State, and Hill and Platt began building political machines, which, for better or for worse, controlled the politics of the Empire State for nearly a quarter of a century.

It is to comply with a very general request to treat this highly interesting and somewhat complex period that this volume is presented—not as a history of legislation, or of the great public questions of that time, but of the personal forces or types of public men who controlled the two great political parties in the State of New York. During these years the State furnished three candidates for President and, including President Arthur, three Presidents who held office for nearly twenty years.

D. S. A.

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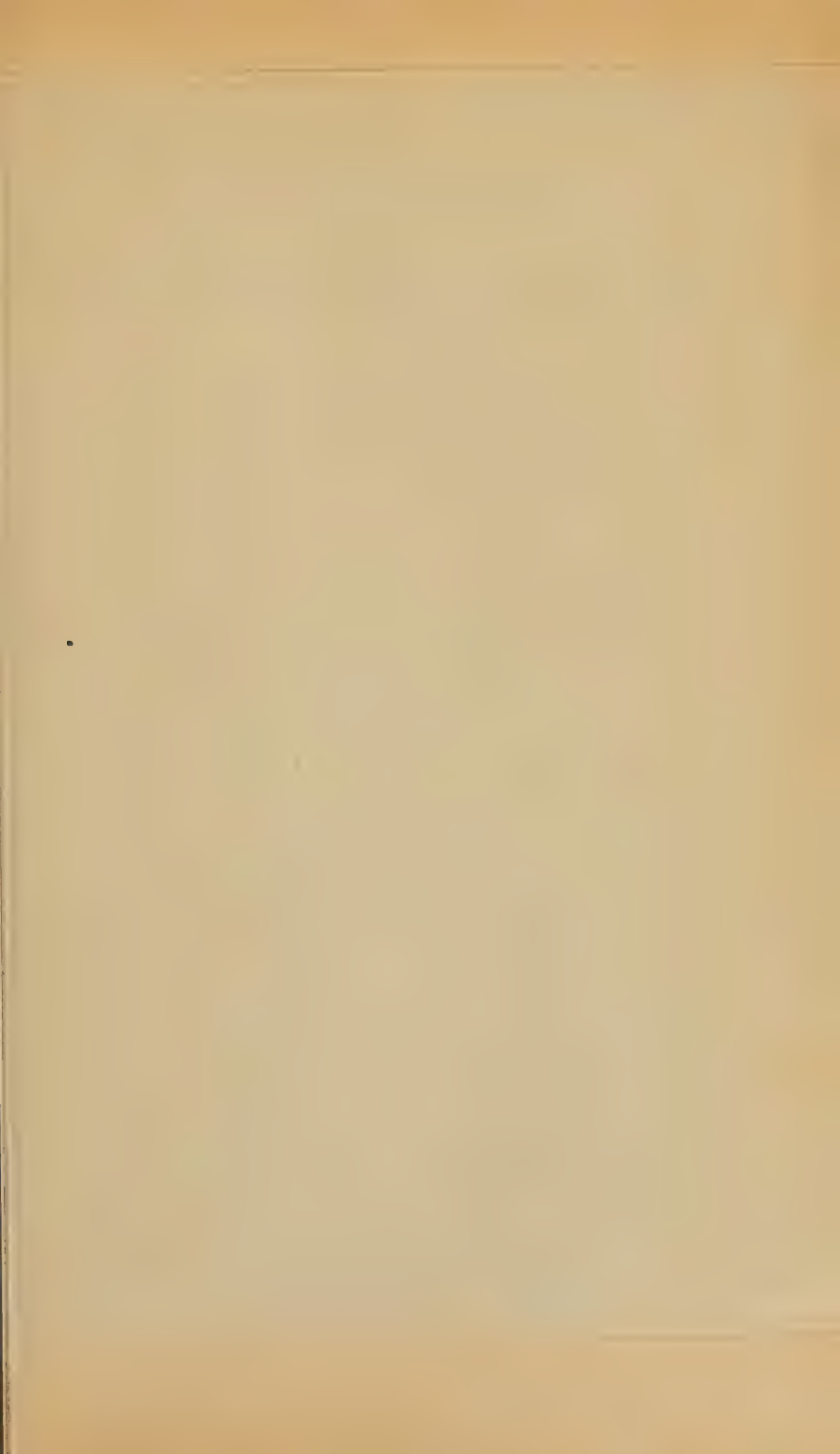
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ERRATA

Corrected readings for "*Four Famous New Yorkers.*"

- Page 12, Line 27—Daniel S. Manning for Daniel E. Manning.
- " 33, " 10— " " " " " " "
- " 40, " 17—Lewis for Cyrus.
- " 45, " 22—Leslie W. Russell for Leslie M. Russell; Canton
for Ogdensburg.
- " 67, " 26—Roswell P. Flower for Roswell B. Flower.
- " 67, " 36—Jeremiah for John.
- " 109, " 3 of note—Alfred C. Chapin for Alfred O. Chapin.
- " 116, " 35—Silas for John.
- " 122, " 23, 25, 27 and 32—Cruger for Crugar.
- " 133, " 7—James for John.
- " 159, " 21—Ruger for Rugar.
- " 163, " 23—seventh for fifth.
- " 210, " 21—Leslie W. Russell for Leslie M. Russell.
- " 212, " 27—Minneapolis for Chicago.
- " 214, " 13—Laroque for Caroque.
- " 237, " 3 of note—Pardon C. Williams for Pardon S.
Williams.
- " 256, " 4—Cornelius N. Bliss for Cornelius S. Bliss.
- " 289, " 31— " " " " " " "
- " 334, " 24— " " " " " " "
- " 386, " 4—14,200 for 17,500.
- " 408, " 20—Hinrichs for Heinrichs.
- " 448, " 37—Charles W. Goodyear for Charles H. Goodyear.
- " 449, " 20—Patrick for Robert.
- " 453, " 5 of note—T. H. Stryker, Rome, for F. H. Stryker,
Utica.
- " 456, " 21—Laroque for Caroque.
- " 468, " 2 of note—1919 for 1918.

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Clarkson, James for John.
Cruger for Crugar.
Goodyear, Charles W. for Charles H.
Hinrichs for Heinrichs.
O'Brien, Jeremiah for John.

FOUR FAMOUS NEW YORKERS

CHAPTER I

GOVERNOR GROVER CLEVELAND

1883

GROVER CLEVELAND approached the Governorship with singular modesty. Although partisans indulged in demonstrations of enthusiasm, he exhibited no exultation and expressed no feeling except one of responsibility. "I will tell you first of all others the policy I intend to adopt," he wrote his brother; "and that is to make the matter a business engagement between the people of the State and myself, in which the obligation on my side is to perform the duties assigned me with an eye single to the interest of my employers. I shall have in my head no idea of re-election or of any higher political preferment, but be very thankful if I can well serve one term as the people's Governor. Do you know that if mother were alive I should feel so much safer? I have always thought her prayers have had much to do with my success."¹ Cleveland's general intellectual qualities, says Bradford, "are admirably illustrated in his spiritual and religious attitude. The metaphysics of religion had no attraction for him. 'The Bible is good enough for me,' he said. 'Just the old book under which I was brought up. I do not want notes or criticisms or explanations about authorship or origin or even cross references.'"²

¹ W. U. Hensel, *Life of Cleveland*, p. 117.

² Gamaliel Bradford in *American Portraits*.

At his inauguration as President he took a little blue bound volume which his mother had given him when a boy. As he bent over and kissed the sacred page at the conclusion of the oath, his lips touched the words of the 112th Psalm, fourth to the tenth verses.

While the newly elected Governor performed his duties as Mayor, he accepted few of the invitations that came to him, and made his only speech at a reception given him in December by the Manhattan Club of New York City. In this address he indicated a perfect comprehension that his great majority of 192,854 signified a scathing rebuke to Republican mismanagement rather than confidence in Democratic policies. "It seemed the very irony of fate," he said, years afterwards, "that a man of Charles J. Folger's type, with a career distinguished by conspicuous and honourable service, and of such unusual capacities, well known to the public, should have been defeated by me, then wholly unknown outside my own small community. I do not think I ever saw Judge Folger either before or after the election, but in all my experience there has been no man for whom I have felt a deeper and more genuine sympathy. From the most dignified tribunal in the State he was transferred unwillingly to Washington as secretary of the treasury, and later, at the dictation of the Federal administration, nominated for Governor without effort on his own part, where he found himself in the centre of innumerable movements beyond his ken, and over which, owing to the manner of his nomination, he could have no control. He was denounced as a tool, a mere machine-made product of latter-day political methods, and, as a result, met a most crushing defeat. It warned me of one of the worst pitfalls to be found in public life. If it had been possible for me to use the power of a great office for purely partisan or personal purposes, I should only have had to think of the gubernatorial campaign of 1882 and the rebuke then administered to such a policy."³

The day before the date fixed for his inauguration (Janu-

³ George F. Parker, *Recollections of Cleveland*, pp. 243-4.

ary 1) Mr. Cleveland, accompanied only by Wilson S. Bissell, his law partner, arrived in Albany. He had visited it but once before, and as it had not been his habit to attend conventions or take part in political campaigns or court proceedings outside his home town, no one recognised him as he passed along the streets. When he appeared the next morning to take the oath of office, critical curiosity measured him with ill-concealed disappointment. His face showed breeding, but was not one to attract attention, lacking the bloom of high intelligence, and being rather weak, almost self-indulgent, in a refined way. By birth a commoner, he possessed a dignity and reserve inclining toward the aristocratic, and although prone to good fellowship among his familiars, he appeared to the many rather exclusive and inaccessible. This left the impression that he was stolid and of a statuesque temperament. It soon became manifest, however, that he had brought with him his well-earned reputation for courage and integrity.

In his first message to the Legislature, a brief, concise document, he treated of the canals about to be free of tolls; of the public schools, of the management of prisons and charitable institutions, of the relations the National Guard should bear to the State, and especially of the need of a State law governing appointments to office. His letter accepting the nomination had declared that "subordinates in public places should be selected and retained for their efficiency, and not because they can be used to accomplish partisan ends. The people have a right to demand that their money should be paid to those who will render the best service in return, and that the appointment and tenure of such places should depend upon ability and merit." Now that he had become Governor he did not sidestep the issue, but insisted that a statute should make the reform of the civil service obligatory.

He exhibited, too, a purpose to sustain the reputation established in Buffalo as the "veto mayor." His early disapproval of a measure reducing the fare on the elevated

railways of New York from ten to five cents created a wave of popular feeling against him. Although he found no fault with the principle of the bill, since the fare should be five cents, he censured it as a "strike bill" which its venal creators, at heart, did not desire, and his approval of which would set a mischievous precedent. "Whatever his sympathies for the working classes might be, he could not, as an honest man, allow such a bill to pass, and come what might, he would not."⁴

His refusal to appoint harbour-masters who exacted exorbitant fees which the Supreme Court of the United States had declared illegal illustrated his fidelity to the public welfare. The veto of a bill that sought to make the Buffalo Fire Department a mere political machine added to his prestige for courage. "When organised in 1880," said the Governor, "it was placed under the control of three commissioners of unquestioned probity, intelligence, and executive ability, who enjoy and deserve the respect of their fellow-townsmen, while the purpose of this bill is to satisfy personal animosities, that the places and patronage attached thereto may be used for party advancement. I believe in an open and sturdy partisanship, which secures the legitimate patronage of party supremacy, but parties were made for the people, and I am unwilling knowingly to give my assent to measures purely partisan, which will sacrifice or endanger their interests."

This bugle note increased the disgust of many Buffalo acquaintances who recalled with bitterness that he had not selected a Buffalo man for any position that brought him into intimate relations with the Executive.⁵ Yet his appointments more often than otherwise reflected political wisdom. Daniel S. Lamont, a young clerk in the Assembly

⁴ Andrew D. White, *Autobiography*, Vol. 1, p. 207.

⁵ The only acquaintance whom Cleveland took with him from Buffalo was William Sinclair, whom he knew as a trustworthy and efficient servant at the Buffalo Club. He made him steward of the Governor's house and later of the White House at Washington.

and a reporter for the Albany *Argus*, who became his military and afterwards his private secretary, seemed fitted by nature to satisfy the new Governor's need. A born politician, shrewd, faithful, and appreciative, without prejudices or resentments, with innate knowledge and an insight amounting to instinct, Lamont was destined to accompany him to Washington and finally to become a member of his cabinet. Equally helpful was William G. Rice, the accomplished assistant secretary, whose rare qualities made him adequate to any task in hand. He promoted to State superintendent of insurance an efficient Republican deputy, and appointed as chairman of the State civil service commission Andrew D. White, the distinguished president of Cornell University, whom John Jay, not less firm in his advocacy of reform, subsequently succeeded.

Yet he early revealed the habit of relying upon men whose success in controlling party nominations disclosed tact and real power. This policy brought him immediately into association with Daniel S. Manning, the intrepid head of the Democratic State Committee, and although their relations never resembled the intimacy existing between him and Lamont, to whom there was neither variableness nor shadow of turning, Manning's influence betrayed itself as plainly as the tracks of a fox appear after a light fall of snow. The New York *Times*, which had zealously supported the Governor with partisan partiality, charged that many of his appointments indicated Manning's directing hand. "This is peculiarly the case," it said, "with the appointment of Mr. Murtha as immigration commissioner and other appointees who represent McLaughlin of Brooklyn." These manifestations of political expediency, however, created little stir compared to the Governor's approval of the Ludlow Street Jail bill. That measure plainly promoted the interests of Sheriff Davidson, the head of Irving Hall, "who worked the jail," said the *Times*, "as a political job for the enrichment of a political gang." There is an innuendo connected with the words "political gang" that

often insinuates more than the facts will sustain; but the approval of the Ludlow Jail Act drove John Kelly into rebellion.

Since the party's resentment of Kelly's part in the defeat of Hancock in 1880, which led to the organisation of the County Democracy in April, 1881, the Tammany boss had behaved better. Though he failed to foresee the nomination of Cleveland in 1882 in time to divide the honour with the County Democracy, he quickly fell into line after the turn of the tide, and loyally supported both State and local tickets. In his opinion, therefore, he deserved early recognition. But favours to McLaughlin and more power to Davidson proved that he did not hold a front seat, and without notice Kelly suddenly appeared in Albany, took control of the Legislature, and with a bold disregard of its effect upon the fall elections, began smashing things. He opposed civil service reform, smothered a charter to secure more responsible government for New York City, defeated the confirmation of several appointees, and transferred the duties of the State Survey, an efficient commission independent of party, to the State engineer. It was a play for spoils and a declaration of war.

As the breach widened the Governor's more cautious friends sought to patch up a peace. But Cleveland refused to become a party to it. On the contrary, at a banquet given by the New York Chamber of Commerce in celebration of the centennial anniversary of Evacuation Day, he accepted Kelly's challenge, asking the thousand business men before him if they were sure their city had trustworthy champions of their interests in the Legislature. Instantly the thunderous applause of the audience, which sprang to its feet, indicated an appreciation of the presence of a Governor who was unafraid of a political boss! It was an hour of triumph. If Cleveland had formerly been an unrecognised figure on the streets of New York, from that moment passers-by stopped to look at him.

To add to the breach the Governor addressed Kelly a

letter, protesting against the re-election of Thomas F. Grady, the most active if not the most offensive of his lieutenants.⁶ It was an audacious move. As he afterwards said: "I did it without advice, and, as I avowed, with extreme regret. But it was the only road open to me, and I made up my mind that I could throw upon these Tammany leaders the responsibility for the recalcitrance of one of their chosen tools." It proved effective. In spite of Kelly's efforts Grady found insurmountable obstacles in his way, and for several years he did not return to the State Senate.

Cleveland's break with Tammany was the beginning of his marvellous career. Other Governors had tolerantly waited for Kelly to strike—Cleveland separated himself at once from such companionship. He let the public know that he did not admire Tammany and would not stand for its methods or its principles. From that moment the people of his State, at least, understood his undaunted courage. He did not much trouble himself about the amenities. His friends sometimes thought him too negligent of the art, for after he had carefully determined upon a policy, he betrayed a spirit, somewhat arrogantly, perhaps, that no political or social influence could affect him in the slightest. He seemed

⁶ Executive Chamber, Albany,
October 20, 1883.

Hon. John Kelly.

MY DEAR SIR:

It is not without hesitation that I write this. I have determined to do so, however, because I see no reason why I should not be entirely frank with you. I am anxious that Mr. Grady should not be returned to the next Senate. I do not wish to conceal the fact that my personal comfort and satisfaction are involved in this matter. But I know that good legislation, based upon a pure desire to promote the interests of the people, and the improvement of the legislative methods are also deeply involved. I forbear to write in detail of the other considerations having relation to the welfare of the party and the approval to be secured by a change for the better in the character of its representatives. These things will occur to you without suggestion from me.

Yours very truly,

GROVER CLEVELAND.

without fear of personal consequences. He appreciated friends and their words of approval, but he would not barter for them. Such inflexibility often cooled the good will of men, and sometimes created deeply rooted enmity. Very early in his gubernatorial career this was illustrated by his failure to appoint upon his staff, at the personal request of Charles A. Dana of the *New York Sun*, an officer well known and liked in National Guard circles. His selection of Isaac H. Maynard as the candidate for secretary of state in the summer of 1883, thus disappointing William Purcell of the *Rochester Herald*, resulted as disastrously. To his intimates, such apparent snubs often seemed as needless as they were unaccountable.

The Governor's break with Tammany naturally pleased Republicans. Their overwhelming defeat had crushed but not paralysed them. They soon manifested a desire to heed the lesson taught them, and to prove repentance Congress passed the Pendleton civil service reform bill providing a civil service commission and non-partisan competitive examination, which it had scornfully flouted before the election of 1882. By a drastic revision of the tariff it also reduced the revenue, then piling up an undesirable surplus in the Treasury. President Arthur's appointments likewise contributed to improve party conditions. Indeed, the apprehensions aroused by changing the Chief Executive gradually disappeared as the moderation of the Arthur administration manifested itself. The reorganisation of the party in New York City also helped to revive confidence. Under the old system the control of the primaries by district associations, composed of office-holders and professional politicians obedient to men higher up, practically disfranchised nine-tenths of the Republican voters, thus sending to State conventions a bunch of machine delegates, who, with their up-state allies, made a majority of the four hundred and fifty members. Their power sourced in strict organisation and the control of patronage. The blindest partisan appreciated the hopelessness of another Republican victory until

conventions represented a freer expression of the party, and for this purpose a reorganisation provided for the dissolution of district associations, and a freedom at the primaries representative of the whole party.

Under these helpful influences the Republican State convention met at Richfield Springs on September 9, 1883. Although a Stalwart body, the new spirit inspired unusual harmony. For the first time in a decade no seat contestants appeared. A more significant feature was the non-appearance of Thomas C. Platt, whose membership of the State and Executive Committees also ceased. The opinion then obtained that his political career had closed. "Platt is buried" was a common saying at the clubs. But some years later, as we shall see, his rivals had occasion to say of him as Sussex said of Leicester in Scott's *Kenilworth*: "The devil aids him surely, for all that would sink another ten fathoms deep seems to make him float the more easily."

Although harmonious the State convention lacked enthusiasm. It was a most astonishing spectacle of virtue under the schoolmaster's rod, which muzzled the spirit that loves excitement and gives *éclat* to an assembly. Moreover, the speech of Eldridge G. Lapham as temporary chairman contrasted strangely with the oratory of Conkling and Woodford, who had a habit of warming conventions into cheers. Even the youngest delegate could remember how the dominating Senator had spoken with the uttermost contempt of "reform," and now reform filled the ears and claimed the votes of men who had upheld the sarcastic orator less than three years before. Democrats declared it "only a party dodge which deceives no one."

Nevertheless, Warner Miller, to use a homely phrase, took the bull by the horns. Instead of convention platitudes he proposed bringing fresh blood into the party by doubling the size of State conventions; selecting delegates without the intervention of local conventions; and by holding primaries throughout the State on the same day. Under the present system, he declared, primaries are not attended by one per

cent of the Republicans, and State conventions represent less than one-tenth of one per cent of the voters. It was his hope that hereafter new men, with wills and ideas of their own, would insist that their opinions be taken into account even though they refused office.⁷ The Senator's speech provoked no cheers, but it commanded close attention. Although without the gift of brilliantly phrased sentences, his easy, simple manners added to the vigour and clearness of his words. It could not be said of him that he was a politician without convictions.

The platform, most carefully moulded to meet existing conditions, received warm approval. It endorsed the Administration; insisted that reform of the civil service, so auspiciously begun, be prosecuted to complete success; favoured a tariff for revenue with just protection to industry; declared for a reform of the primaries; approved the plan of party reorganisation; affirmed the free canal policy; denounced the tendency to create monopolies; and called for a national bureau of labour statistics. With equal unanimity the convention renominated the ticket elected in 1881.⁸ "The Half-breeds had the speeches and took the ticket," said the *Nation*, "but the Machine has a majority of the State Committee, controls the organisation in New York City, and is directed to reform itself so far as, in its own opinion, such regeneration is advisable."⁹

While Republicans thus knelt at the mourner's bench and professed the fruits of repentance, Daniel E. Manning arranged to control the Democratic State convention which met at Buffalo on September 29. His plan centered on the destruction of Tammany's power, and to defeat Roswell P. Flower, upon whose money John Kelly relied, he boldly

⁷ New York *Tribune*, September 20, 1883.

⁸ For Secretary of State, Joseph B. Carr, Rensselaer; Comptroller, Ira Davenport, Steuben; Atty.-Gen., Leslie W. Russell, St. Lawrence; Treasurer, Pliny T. Saxton, Wayne; Engineer and Surveyor, Silas Seymour, Saratoga.

⁹ September 24, 1883.

entered Flower's home district (Jefferson County) and administered an humiliating defeat. Other up-State districts then quietly fell into line. Nevertheless, the usual convention uproar occurred over New York City's representation. Thomas F. Grady spoke for Tammany, Bourke Cockran represented Irving Hall, and J. Ellery Anderson appeared for the County Democracy. Their oratory consumed the day and their filibustering wasted the night, but on the morning of the second day action was reached on the Committee's report, giving the County Democracy 38 delegates, Tammany 24, and Irving Hall 10. On its adoption the vote stood 280 to 93. Kelly then understood that he had stepped off on the wrong foot. Thereafter the acceptance of the Manning platform and the Manning slate became a mere matter of form.¹⁰

The platform, carefully ignoring national questions, approved the Governor's administration, claimed that it had reformed the civil service, abolished assessments, freed and purified the primaries, reduced taxation, and revised business methods in the conduct of State affairs. While it was true that the Governor had reviewed these matters in his messages and had made some progress in reform, it was plain that the platform had artistically camouflaged the facts disclosed by the record of the Tammany legislature. The belief obtained that Manning, having the national campaign of 1884 in mind, had exploited what Cleveland stood for rather than what the party had done.

The campaign that followed was neither noisy nor strenuous. Democrats relied upon the prestige gained the year before, while Republicans, mindful of their handicap, sought to re-establish party unity. The result, however, tempered the great expectations of the Democrats, for although, with the exception of Secretary of State, they elected their can-

¹⁰ For Secretary of State, Isaac H. Maynard, Delaware; Comptroller, Alfred C. Chapin, Kings; Treasurer, Robert A. Maxwell, Genesee; Atty.-Gen., Dennis O'Brien, Jefferson; Engineer and Surveyor, Elnathan Sweet, Albany.

didates, the overwhelming majority of the year before had dwindled to less than 17,000, the highest plurality being 88,000 less than Cleveland's and the lowest Republican vote 84,000 more than Folger's. Moreover, the combined vote totaled about the same as in 1882, which enabled the Republicans to regain control of each branch of the Legislature.¹¹

Perhaps the greatest surprise, however, was the defeat of Isaac H. Maynard. In making up his slate Manning adopted the Governor's suggestion of Maynard for secretary of state, the office sought by William Purcell of the Rochester *Union*. Friends wondered at his choice. Although bright, exceedingly courteous, and inclined to reforms, he was young, little known, and without political experience. But Cleveland, though not a typical idealist, often gave evidence of nourishing ideals, and as an intimate friend phrased it, "he thought Maynard one of the new younger men who would bring a fresh impulse toward righteousness into the Democratic party." The selection naturally stung Purcell, who never forgave Cleveland, and who contributed largely to Maynard's defeat by exploiting the latter's reform temperance views. Cleveland subsequently asked Attorney-General O'Brien to make Maynard a deputy, and later, when President, berthed him in the Treasury Department. It was the irony of fate that Maynard, some years after, transferred his allegiance to David B. Hill, ending his career in dishonour and humiliation.

¹¹ The State officials' pluralities: Sec. of State Carr (Rep.), 18,583; Treasurer Maxwell (Dem.), 17,568; Comptroller Chapin (Dem.), 16,219; Atty.-Gen. O'Brien (Dem.), 13,640; Engineer Sweet (Dem.), 18,842.

CHAPTER II

CLEVELAND'S PLAY FOR POSITION

1884

IF the result of the State election in 1883 had sobered the Democratic party, it had also relieved it of a Tammany legislature, whose greed for spoils had disgusted Cleveland. This left the Governor free to work out before the meeting of the Democratic National Convention any policy he desired to present. It was apparent that the privilege of advising a Republican legislature had its advantages. His appointees, whether confirmed or not, would reflect the character of the men whom he delighted to honour, while his disposition of legislation, with power to approve or veto, would give him opportunity to reveal the depth of his reform tendencies. Indeed, it was recognised that the work of the Legislature, at least so far as it related to reform, must determine the sincerity of the Governor as well as of the Republican leaders, and thus in a measure guide the people's action in the ensuing campaign.

Cleveland's message in January, 1884, rang clear. The desire of an official intent upon the public welfare seemed to guide his pen. Although several specific recommendations, notably his opposition to the purchase of additional land to safeguard the water supply in the Adirondacks, indicated that an honest man could be too narrow and too economical, yet the candour and poise of the message was wholly becoming the Chief Magistrate of a great Commonwealth. No suggestion of a national issue appeared. Nor did he refer to the new political temper that had asserted itself in the State. However much the Independents desired to hear some expression on which to base a

continuance of their allegiance, he carefully avoided any intimation that the patent of reform rested in the possession of any particular party or group of individuals. But without fettering his future discretion he introduced a robust and independent spirit which betrayed an intention, if it did not bind him, to act solely for the public good.

It was helpful, too, that Theodore Roosevelt reappeared in the Legislature. Two years before he had entered the Assembly, a young man of twenty-three, fresh from Harvard, with square head, matted dry sandy hair, and an iron jaw. His shibboleth was reform, and early in the session of 1882 he astounded his colleagues by demanding the impeachment of Judge Westbrook of Newbury "on the ground of corrupt collusion with Jay Gould and the prostitution of his high judicial office to serve the purpose of wealthy and unscrupulous stock gamblers." His demand failed for want of votes, but his self-confidence, plainness of speech, readiness in retort, and terrible earnestness, deeply stirred the people of his district, who ran him 2,000 ahead of his ticket in the year Grover Cleveland swept the State by 192,000. This expression of confidence commissioned him to pursue the methods which had made him famous in the preceding session. As a further recognition of his merits the Republican minority complimented him with the nomination for Speaker. At the end of the session *Harper's Weekly* said of him: "With energy and ardour, and with a directness and plainness of speech from which older legislators shrink, Mr. Roosevelt, in the last session, moved the Westbrook inquiry, and in the present session he has urged proceedings to vacate the charter of the Manhattan Elevated Railway Company. He has also introduced the municipal civil service reform bill, and his voice and vote are sure for whatever is honest, wise and progressive."¹ But Tammany then controlled the Legislature, and all efforts at reform ended without official action. In 1884, however, Titus Sheard, the Republican Speaker, made Roosevelt chairman

¹ April 21, 1883.

of the Committee on Cities, giving him full authority to work for their betterment. With the cunning of a wizard he put his finger upon the sources of corruption, and secured the passage of a series of laws which practically revolutionised the municipal government. As Rufus Choate said of John Quincy Adams: "He had an unerring instinct for the jugular vein."

One of the Roosevelt bills deprived the Board of Aldermen of the confirming power, thus dealing a deadly blow to John Kelly's control over the Mayor by means of corrupt deals. When this reached the Governor he promptly approved it. "The change made by the provisions of this bill," he wrote, "gives opportunity for an improvement in the administration of municipal affairs, and I am satisfied that it violates no right of the people of the locality affected which they now enjoy." Another bill made the city comptroller and the president of the Board of Aldermen elective officers. Another substituted salaries for fees in county offices, thereby saving \$200,000 annually. Still another made the Mayor the actual head of the municipal government, giving him power to appoint heads of departments, commissioners, marshals, and police justices, and to remove them for cause, after a hearing and with the approval of the Governor. These measures, which concentrated responsibility, minimised waste, and stopped the robbery of the people, the Governor likewise approved. To the argument that the unrestricted appointing power given the Mayor made him a dictator, Cleveland replied: "The statement concedes either that the people are vile or that self-government is a deplorable failure." The earliest cartoon of Roosevelt represents him in the act of cutting the claws of the Tammany tiger. A little later the Tiger appears in a state of total collapse, teeth and claws scattered about, while Roosevelt and Cleveland, arm in arm, survey the wreck.

Among other things Roosevelt disclosed that under the old system of fees county clerks had annually pocketed

\$50,000, to which they had no right; that in one year Sheriff Davidson received \$85,000, for most of which no legal authority existed; that the Register had confessed paying \$20,000 to become a Tammany candidate, with the expectation of recovering it through the emoluments of the office, and that in 1883 the Surrogate's subordinates had wrongfully taken \$10,000. Upon the strength of this drastic report Roosevelt filed charges with the Governor, asking the removal of Sheriff Davidson. The Citizens' Committee of Fifty backed the petition, and the independent press demanded ejectment; but Cleveland took no action. If he discovered mitigating circumstances, which is possible, he left no memorandum. This opened him to suspicion. In the judgment of some of his contemporaries the subtle influence of ambition, when stirred by the far-sighted, resolute Manning, whose future plans required the services of the accused leader of Irving Hall, had clouded the vision presented in the letter to his brother.

To conclude his work, Roosevelt introduced a measure, known as the Tenure-of-Office Bill, which authorised the next Mayor to appoint the Register and the Commissioner of Public Works. This aimed at the displacement of Hubert O. Thompson, whose administration of the Public Works Department had long been characterised by such extravagance, if not wholesale graft, that two legislative committees had condemned his methods and a grand jury had indicted him for corruption. The press of the city, regardless of party, had stigmatised him. "That an officer who had been found guilty of such an overwhelming series of irregularities and extravagances," said the *New York Evening Post*, "should be retained in office for an hour is a startling illustration of the absolute lack of anything like a moral sense in our municipal government." The *New York Times* handled Thompson even more severely. "Facts enough have been brought out to stamp his record with inefficiency, extravagance, and corruption second only to that of one of his predecessors in office named Tweed."

Whitelaw Reid warned Roosevelt to beware of Thompson and "his astute lawyer," and his preparations had been most thorough. Nevertheless the bill encountered unexpected opposition. At every turn somebody blocked its progress. Indeed, its pathway bristled with so many obstacles that it seemed as if the formidable organisation which controlled former legislatures had again appeared with all its old-time vigour, the sinister purpose being to delay rather than kill the bill. This would keep it from the Governor. But Roosevelt's activity, coupled with the warm support of the Committee of Fifty, finally secured its passage six days before the Legislature adjourned.

Hubert O. Thompson was a young man, still in his thirties, and of marked energy and courage. He had defied Kelly, led in the organisation of the County Democracy, and at the convention of 1882 had boldly and with great earnestness favoured casting its vote solidly for Cleveland, which made the historic third ballot decisive. Thus he became Manning's chief lieutenant, ever ready to accept orders and always successful in their execution. To deprive such a man of his office on the eve of a Presidential nomination was to Manning unthinkable, and the Governor found reasons for disapproving the measure. Among others given, he declared that "the evident intention of the measure would be entirely defeated if the Mayor now in office should allow the present incumbents to hold over till the expiration of their terms instead of appointing others to their places."

The Governor's failure to remove Sheriff Davidson had proven a severe disappointment to lovers of real reform, but his veto of the Tenure-of-Office Bill came as a shock. Although the bill might be defective, its friends thought a Governor who professed a desire to extirpate corruption and talked of the use of administrative power for the public benefit should have allowed the Courts to pass upon it or trusted the next Legislature to cure it. "George William Curtis knows now," said a pessimist, "that his idol has clay feet."

CHAPTER III

BLAINE PREFERRED TO PRESIDENT ARTHUR

1884

WHILE a Republican legislature, under the dominating influence of Theodore Roosevelt, made reform a vital issue in New York, the selection of a candidate for President deeply disturbed the party. Many Stalwarts preferred President Arthur. Although not a statesman of representative significance, he had surprised the country by his tact, his firmness, and his high sense of public duty. He had approved the Civil Service Act of 1883, called "the Magna Charta of civil service reform";¹ appointed Dorman B. Eaton chairman of the Commission, who with Curtis and Schurz had wrought zealously for the reform; and placed fourteen thousand employés under the civil service rules. His appointees to the United States Supreme Court adorned that tribunal,² and his refusal to remove James Russell Lowell as minister to England had endeared him to lovers of good literature. Indeed, under the President's management had come a political quiet that especially commended him to influential business men, who thought it wise, since no sufficient reason existed for a change, to let well enough alone.

Arthur undoubtedly desired the nomination. He would make no personal effort, he said, but if tendered him, although doubtful if he could survive another administration,³ he would accept. Great obstacles, however, stood in

¹ Ostrogovski, *Democracy*, Vol. 2, p. 491.

² Horace Gray of Massachusetts and Samuel Blatchford of New York. He offered these places to Conkling and Edmunds, both of whom declined.

³ Paine, *Life of Nast*, p. 485. He died in 1886.

his way. He had grieved Senator Sherman, had antagonised Blaine, alienated Conkling and Platt, and offended former President Grant, who, next to Blaine, was then the most potent factor in the party. "President Arthur had seemed averse to making any removals," he wrote, "no matter how offensive the parties have been to me and my friends."⁴ In April, 1884, he again wrote: "The Administration has seemed to me to be a sort of ad interim one endeavouring to offend no one. Probably it has fewer enemies,—outspoken ones,—than any preceding it, and fewer hearty, positive friends than any except Hayes possibly. But Arthur will probably go into the convention second in number of supporters when he would not have probably a single vote if it was not for his army of officials and the vacancies he has to fill."⁵

On the other hand, James G. Blaine benefited by Arthur's weakness. The Half-Breeds stood for him and several Stalwarts, among them Thomas C. Platt, Louis F. Payn and John F. Smyth, who opposed President Arthur and Senator Edmunds because the former "deserted us" and the latter "is supported by our most offensive foes."⁶ For Platt it was a Hobson choice. He could not get back to the home pasture, and to begin making a fold of his own he supported the man who had practically made Robertson's appointment as collector of the Port of New York,—an act which forced his resignation from the Senate.

The element in New York, classified as Independents, favoured George F. Edmunds of Vermont. Roosevelt preferred the distinguished Senator, and with characteristic zeal organised the Vermonter's friends into an aggressive body, who, at the Utica State Convention (April 3) to select delegates-at-large to Chicago, held the balance of power. They were not numerous. The Arthur delegates numbered more than two to their one, but when the former offered an

⁴ Badeau, *Grant in Peace*, p. 334.

⁵ *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, June, 1897, p. 162.

⁶ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 181.

equal division of the delegates-at-large, Roosevelt, glimpsing their burning desire to break Blaine's prestige, claimed the entire four. It was an audacious demand. Had time permitted, further deliberation might have brought a fairer division, but the midnight hour forced an acceptance of the resolute leader's terms. Immediately the Blaine men charged Edmunds with being a mask for Arthur, and its apparent truth turned several Edmunds delegates into Blaine supporters. Nevertheless, with these additions the latter lacked nine votes of a majority. Of the four delegates elected Roosevelt and Andrew D. White headed the list, although White was not a member of the convention or cognizant of the use of his name.

This coup d'état served to advertise to the country the presence in New York of a new power, which nursed implacable hostility to Blaine. Curtis referred to his support by Louis F. Payn, and declared that the applause which greeted Thomas C. Platt at the Utica convention indicated benumbed memories of the events that led to the tragedy of 1881 and to the party's overthrow in 1882. Andrew D. White spoke with no less fervour. "Those representing the measures of reform already begun and thus far so successfully carried out," he said, "form a deeply earnest and devoted minority who have something of that same fanaticism, so-called, which animated those who developed the Republican party in the old anti-slavery days. A constantly increasing number of thoughtful people are becoming restive under the old political methods. They believe that a return to better modes of government is now the leading question. To them it is the only living question. These people in this State hold the balance of power, and it is highly important at this juncture that the Republican party makes no mistake in this respect. Reconstruction is virtually accomplished. The financial question arouses no alarm. As to the tariff the present Congress shows the futility of attempting to disturb it. But this question of remedying old political methods and of returning to a better order of things grows

greater, and the Republican party must show at Chicago that it has the ability earnestly to devise reforms and courageously to fight them through, if its candidate wishes to secure the electoral vote of New York.”⁷

As early as May 5 Senator Sherman wrote: “If I was at all confident that Blaine could carry New York I would be willing to see him nominated. This seems to be impossible in the face of the known opposition of the Independents, the Stalwarts, and generally the money men of New York, who fear magnetic statesmanship.”⁸ Ten days later he said: “It is more apparent than ever that Blaine’s nomination means the loss of New York. Still, this will not deter his friends who are willing to take the chances.”⁹ On February 22, Blaine wrote Stephen B. Elkins, his campaign manager: “I neither desire nor expect the nomination, but I don’t intend that man in the White House shall have it.”¹⁰ Nor was he entirely happy when the nomination seemed to be coming his way. To him the election of any Republican candidate seemed doubtful. Since 1880 three-fourths of the States supporting Garfield had elected Democratic governors. He believed the recent financial crash, involving Grant and Ward, might continue this political reaction. Moreover, if nominated, the question of conciliating the Independents, the Grant wing, and some of the Administration leaders, disturbed him. In fact, as the opening day of the Chicago Convention (June 3) approached, he had a presentiment, as he afterwards confessed, that his nomination would bring disaster.¹¹

At Chicago President Arthur’s strength sourced in the South, Edmunds’ in New England, and Blaine’s in most of the other sure Republican States. Even delegates from States presenting favourite sons, except Connecticut, ex-

⁷ New York *Tribune*, April 29, 1884.

⁸ Letters of, Cong. Library (unpublished).

⁹ *Ibid.*, May 15.

¹⁰ *Writings of J. J. Ingalls*, p. 437.

¹¹ Edward Stanwood, *Life of Blaine*, p. 270.

pressed friendliness for the Maine statesman. Yet men hesitated. "There is a want of confidence with his warmest friends as to the propriety of his nomination," wrote Senator Sherman.¹² In their private conferences, said George William Curtis, party leaders carefully considered the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad disclosures, to which a recent publication of the "Mulligan Letters" called sharp attention.¹³ While a majority, perhaps, regarded the charges after the investigation of 1876 as burnt powder, many deemed the story full of danger.

It was evident, however, that the nomination of Blaine inspired no fear of defeat at the polls, since the Arthur delegates stubbornly refused to accept Edmunds, while Sherman, the second choice of many Edmunds delegates, could not command sufficient support to make a successful fusion. The suggested candidacy of General Sherman, which Curtis sought to vitalise, and which Blaine himself thought, and perhaps feared, might succeed,¹⁴ elicited faint response to the Chairman's tactful reference to "the grand old hero of Kenesaw Mountain and of the march from Atlanta to the sea." Thus the contest continued through three ballots without material change, showing that Blaine's opponents either lacked strength, or that many preferred him to any other than their own candidate. On the fourth ballot, the Sherman, Logan, and half the Edmunds delegates supported the Maine statesman, giving him 134 majority.¹⁵

¹² Letters of (unpublished), Cong. Library.

¹³ *Harpers' Weekly*, May 10, 1884.

¹⁴ *North American Review*, December, 1888.

¹⁵ The vote of New York stood as follows:

Candidates	1st ballot	2nd ballot	3rd ballot	4th ballot
James G. Blaine	28	28	28	30
Chester A. Arthur	31	31	32	29
George F. Edmunds	12	12	12	9
Robert T. Lincoln	1	1		1
Joseph R. Hawley				2

At a later hour of the day John A. Logan of Illinois became the nominee for Vice President.

Senator Sherman, in a letter to Joseph B. Foraker of Ohio, who had placed him in nomination, thus summed up the matter: "I have no respect for the complaints of the Independents who have no part in politics except to find fault. They could easily have dictated the nomination, for notwithstanding the strong popular feeling for Blaine, there was a sober sense that his nomination was a dangerous experiment."¹⁶ George William Curtis agreed with him.¹⁷ Roosevelt believed otherwise, since a switch to any one else would quickly have sent a majority to Blaine, who was the real choice of the delegates.¹⁸ The *Nation* said that the Arthur men as much as the supporters of Blaine "resented the idea of an Independent tail wagging the dog, and so both worked to send the dog into the campaign without any tail."¹⁹

Within a week after the nomination *Harper's Weekly* announced its revolt. "Fidelity to Republican principles," it said, "requires indifference to present Republican success, and *Harper's Weekly*, which more than once has not hesitated in the interest of public morality and of party

The total vote of each candidate was:

James G. Blaine	334½	349	375	541
Chester A. Arthur	278	276	274	207
George F. Edmunds	93	85	69	41
John A. Logan	63½	61	53	7
John Sherman	30	28	25	
Joseph R. Hawley	13	13	13	15
Robert T. Lincoln	4	4	8	2
William T. Sherman	2	2	2	
Total vote	818	818	819	813
Necessary to choice	410	410	410	407

¹⁶ Letters of, June 9, 1888, Cong. Library.

¹⁷ *Harpers' Weekly*, June 14.

¹⁸ Letter to the author.

¹⁹ New York *Nation*, June 12.

purification to oppose other Republican nominations, cannot sustain the significant one against which it has so earnestly protested and which is a practical abdication of Republican character and purposes.”²⁰ This raised a question in casuistry. Having been elected a delegate “for the nomination of candidates to be supported for President and Vice President,” said his critics, “it was incumbent upon Curtis either to decline the trust, or, having accepted and acted, to carry out his contract by supporting the candidates.” To this Curtis replied: “No honourable man, in a convention or out of it, could allow a majority to bind him to a course which he morally disapproved.”²¹ In a private letter, he said: “As a delegate, the member of a convention votes and does his delegated duty to the best of his ability. Having discharged that special duty, his general duty as a citizen recurs, and he is to weigh the action of a convention like every other citizen, and vote only as his conscience directs.”²² It was also recalled that when discussing the Conkling resolution to exclude certain West Virginia delegates who voted not to abide the action of the convention of 1880, Garfield said: “We are responsible for our votes to our constituents and to them alone. There never was a convention, there never can be a convention, of which I am one delegate, equal in right to every other delegate, that shall bind my vote against my will on any question whatever.”²³

Curtis felt keenly the accusation of bad faith, especially as cherished friends whom he regarded as sincere as himself, believed his course in the highest degree dishonourable.²⁴

On the other hand, Roosevelt did not escape criticism for refusing to adopt Curtis’ course. “I was dumfounded,” wrote William Roscoe Thayer. “My old acquaintance, our

²⁰ *Harper's Weekly*, June 14.

²¹ *Ibid.*, June 28.

²² Charles Dudley Warner, *Life of Curtis*, p. 290.

²³ *Official Proceedings*, Rep. Nat. Con., 1880, p. 40.

²⁴ Warner, *Life of Curtis*, p. 290.

trusted leader, whose career in the New York Assembly we had watched with an almost holy satisfaction, seemed to have strangely abandoned the fundamental principles which we and he had believed in, and he had so nobly upheld. Whittier's poem, 'Ichabod,' seemed to have been aimed at him, especially in its third stanza:

'Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age
Falls back in night.' " ²⁵

Roosevelt regarded Blaine as "a bad man," yet he decided, "although against his inclination, and, as he believed, against his interest," ²⁶ to support him because he thought the future of the country safer under control of the Republican party. This exposed him to suspicion, as his biographer suggests, but he was as sincere as Curtis, who as an anti-protectionist preferred Cleveland.

Immediately following the action of *Harper's Weekly* came the announcement of an organised revolt of the Independents, pledging their support to Governor Cleveland if nominated for President. The presence among the bolters of so many anti-protectionists at once broadened the exciting cause into one of tariff reform. In an early letter to a friend in Pennsylvania, Curtis declared that "the Independents are anti-protection, and whoever we do elect must favour revenue reform. . . . No man is more obnoxious to them than Mr. Blaine, and the principal reason for this is the strong following he has in Pennsylvania." ²⁷ This confession of the real reason for the revolt was strengthened by a statement of one of the Harper Brothers, made prior to the Chicago Convention, that the *Weekly* would support no candidate not opposed to protection. Moreover, all the professedly Republican journals in New York, which joined the revolt, had supported the Morrison Tariff Bill, making

²⁵ Thayer's *Roosevelt*, p. 52.

²⁶ Charles G. Washburn, *Career of Roosevelt*, p. 14.

²⁷ New York *Tribune*, October 24, 1884.

a horizontal reduction of twenty per cent. Thus the Independent movement, based ostensibly upon Blaine's "unfitness," but in reality upon its hostility to protection, became a two-edged sword. Unlike the Liberal party of 1872, it did not assume a national character, although Carl Schurz took the leadership; but it was at once proclaimed an antidote to any Tammany defection that might follow Governor Cleveland's nomination.

CHAPTER IV

CLEVELAND AND MANNING

1884

WHILE the Blaine contest slowly developed, the Democrats sought to escape the bog into which the divisive Morrison revenue bill had plunged them by tenderly nursing the candidacy of Samuel J. Tilden, the martyr of their party. His loss of the Presidency, which had seemed within his grasp, represented an abiding sentiment of wrongs that could easily be fanned into a flame, and although he seemed a medley of contradiction, and was personally known to few within or without the State, the belief obtained that the opportunity had now come for righting an injustice. When a Republican revolt seemed probable, however, an Albany telegram, inspired by Lieutenant-Governor Hill, who wanted the Governor out of his way, declared it "an open secret that Cleveland's friends intend to press him for the nomination if the National Republican Convention should nominate a certain candidate."¹ This stirred the wrath of Tammany and started an active campaign for Tilden. But the seed silently sowed by Hill, Lamont, Maxwell, Apgar, Benedict and other State officials had fallen upon good soil.

Cleveland took no part in this propaganda. While he could not be wholly indifferent to such a promotion, for he was human, he gave little heed to the talk and less attention to the plans of the designers. Indeed, his interest could not be said to amount to an active aspiration. Moreover, it would be too venturesome to indicate the exact time when Manning seriously entertained the idea of making Cleveland a candidate for President. Very naturally the Governor's

¹ Republished in *Harper's Weekly*, May 31, 1884.

enormous majority flashed the thought of his possible candidacy to the minds of many people, but everybody of intelligence, regardless of political affiliations, knew that neither his record nor personality contributed materially to it. His nomination for governor resulted from a bitter factional fight, and his overwhelming election grew out of a more bitter factional contest in the Republican party. Thus his prestige, compared with that of Tilden's, which spanned the continent, seemed insignificant. Except as the "veto Mayor" and "the Governor with a big majority," knowledge of his real merits did not extend far beyond his own city. In its list of candidates for President, the Democratic press, though it included Roswell P. Flower, had scarcely mentioned Cleveland. Moreover, Kelly's intolerance and the Governor's independence had created the belief that if one would slaughter the party when denied his way, the other preferred defeat to surrender.

It was an open secret, too, that small friendship existed between the Governor and Manning. The latter resented the recent approval of a measure abolishing the *Albany Argus* as a State paper, which he then owned. Besides, he knew that Cleveland did not approve all his methods as chairman of the State committee. His selection of men to execute his purposes certainly did not differentiate the bad from the good, especially in his contests with Tammany, and although the Governor had saved Hubert O. Thompson, whom he subsequently refused to appoint collector of the Port of New York, Manning had seen Cleveland's look of distrust. With Tilden he had his way—with Cleveland he was never sure. Indeed, it was not a secret that Manning's appointment as secretary of the treasury had been secured by Tilden's entreaty, and that subsequently Cleveland's expressed wish stimulated Manning's resignation.

Whatever their differences, however, as the spring of 1884 advanced Manning regarded Cleveland a genuine party asset. He discovered that the Governor had red blood in his veins, was moderate in the expression of his views, un-

deviating in his sense of duty, and observant of the proprieties in executing any trust imposed upon him. Moreover, he noted the favourable impression made by his vetoes; the high character of many of his appointees; and the tolerant views respecting him expressed by the greater part of the press. Thus, although conscious of his own and the party's lingering preference for Tilden, he very early judged Cleveland a stronger candidate for President than Bayard or Thurman, or Randall or Hendricks, or any one of the half-dozen favourite sons then mentioned. He knew, too, that Tilden's physical condition would not permit an acceptance of the nomination if tendered him.

Yet Manning keenly appreciated the necessity of eliminating many obstacles before the Democratic State Convention met at Saratoga on June 19, and to avoid discord he arranged for an equal division of the delegates between Tammany and the County Democracy; for seating William Purcell's anti-Cleveland delegation from Rochester; and for the selection as a delegate-at-large of Lester B. Faulkner, the manager of Flower's campaign for President. Then came the dissent of *Harper's Weekly*; the organised revolt of the Independents, pledging their support to the Governor if nominated; and, as a crowning stroke, the letter of Tilden (June 10) declaring that "I ought not to assume a task which I have not the physical strength to carry through." Instantly, Thomas F. Grady flashed the retort: "Tilden's physical infirmities floated the excuse, but Manning's political necessities suggested the physical infirmities."

To shun platform troubles Manning had the declaration of party principles referred to the National Convention, but carefully stressed the point "that no issue can be more important than the election of a President, whose character and public reputation shall give to the whole people assurance of an honest, impartial, and efficient administration of the laws, without suspicion of personal ends or private interests." After this shot at Blaine the convention elected sixty-eight delegates, proposed by the several districts, and

four delegates-at-large.² As a further safeguard it instructed the delegation to vote as a unit for any candidate named by a majority after its arrival in Chicago. This iron-clad rule, which Republicans had abolished, although it admittedly secured the proper weight to a State, Manning knew would give him power to present the Governor as the unanimous choice of the Empire State, notwithstanding five delegates represented Flower, seventeen opposed Cleveland, and nine remained unpledged. A few hours after the convention adjourned the Independents declared that failure to nominate Cleveland would crown the party's frequent errors with a colossal blunder.

When the New York Democrats reached Chicago (July 8) it was evident the course of the Independents, coupled with Tilden's withdrawal, had acted as leaven. The vote on sustaining the unit rule, although the discussion occupied the entire first day, revealed 463 ayes to 332 noes. Immediately the defeated objectors held a midnight conference to effect a fusion. But no combination developed. If the convention knew little of Cleveland, it knew too much of other candidates. Randall's defeat of the Morrison revenue bill destroyed him; Bayard's and Carlisle's free-trade views weakened them in the East; Thurman and Hoadly divided Ohio; Butler of Massachusetts had no strength in the South; and Joseph E. McDonald of Indiana, although the ablest man of the group, having a large brain, a wealth of experience, and the gift of befriending other men, was clearly not a favourite of fortune. Meantime came Tilden's second letter of withdrawal, with a declaration for Cleveland.

Nevertheless, the cut and dried speeches presenting favourite sons occupied the day. They wearied even John Kelly, a most enthusiastic anti-Cleveland shouter, who listlessly stroked a large, brown felt hat, while Thomas F. Grady, known as "Kelly's mouth-piece," dozed at his side. Of Tammany's three famous orators in the time of Kelly and

² Daniel E. Manning, Lester B. Faulkner, John C. Jacobs, and Edward Cooper.

Croker, John R. Fellows was perhaps the most impressive and W. Bourke Cockran the most scholarly and eloquent; but Grady ranked as the better logician and the most faithful. His ability to think clearly, to act quickly, and to measure accurately the merit of his cause, made him a tower of strength. In repose his fat, good-natured face, as he nestled like a big boy close to Kelly, gave no indication of the tremendous motor-power that responded to the touch of a self-starter.

Farther down the aisle rested Daniel E. Manning, the wide brow and stalwart frame making him easily distinguishable. His physical resemblance to Grover Cleveland gave delegates, denied the privilege of seeing the candidate, an idea of his rugged proportions. The face, also, though not a likeness of the Governor's, possessed the same firm mouth, and indicated the unyielding spirit that dared to oppose Tammany. Next to Manning sat a thick-set, distinguished looking man, with jet black hair, a glossy black beard, high white forehead, and sharp, restless eyes that seemed never to droop even during Hendricks' dreary speech presenting McDonald. This was Smith M. Weed, his chief adviser. Grouped in front, their eye-glasses glistening in the sunlight, were William C. Whitney and Edward Cooper, types of the successful New Yorker who mingles business and politics. Not far away Hubert O. Thompson, the beneficiary of Cleveland's veto of the Tenure-of-Office Bill, neighbored with Sheriff Davidson, complacently contemplating their well-played part in the interest of reform.

The only nervous man among the New Yorkers was Daniel N. Lockwood of Buffalo, from his youth a friend and political associate of Cleveland. He had placed him in nomination for mayor and for governor, and was now impatiently awaiting the call of "New York" to present his name for President. It was a delicate task. Cleveland's rapid advancement naturally excited the jealousy of veterans in public and party service, and Lockwood's speech, artfully presenting Cleveland simply as the most available man

under existing political conditions, was to be the poultice to allay their envy. That the mention of his candidate's name indicated the favourite was amply evidenced by the tremendous cheers, the most prolonged of the day; but his closing sentence, pledging the electoral vote of New York, opened, Æolus-like, Tammany's cave of the winds. Instantly Grady sprang to his feet, exclaiming "Cleveland cannot carry New York." Then, making his way to the platform amidst the wildest excitement, he declared, in a dashing, audacious attack, that the labouring and anti-monopoly interests would never support him. W. Bourke Cockran, rising to second the nomination of Thurman, renewed the attack. He belittled Cleveland's ability. "You are told," he said, "that Tilden's mantle has fallen upon Cleveland. The mantle of a giant upon the shoulders of a dwarf! If it be so he is doomed to be smothered. The labouring element of New York want none of him." Amos J. Cummings, whose slight, dark figure and musical tones contrasted strangely with the robust form and raucous voice of Cockran, uttered the same refrain: "If you put on the torn garment of New York, you banish the labour vote."

Edward S. Bragg of Wisconsin, the famous commander of the Iron Brigade, and a warm advocate of Cleveland, then took the floor, and facing Tammany, he said: "We love him for the enemies he has made." Grady quickly replied: "In behalf of his enemies I accept your statement." Bragg retorted: "Riddleberger of Virginia, whose treachery caused a Democratic defeat in that State, would not be permitted to speak here." Then pointing his finger at the Tammany delegation, he exclaimed: "Gentlemen, behold the Riddlebergers of New York." Thereupon a stentorian voice came from the gallery—"a little more grape, Captain Bragg." Instantly the convention, recalling General Taylor's famous order at Molino del Ray as he saw the Mexicans advancing, sprang to its feet and cheered for several minutes. And Bragg gave them more grape. "They pose here as the representatives of labour, and their labour is limited to turning

the crank of the machine. Search them and you will find nothing but a bunch of disappointed office-seekers, with personal grievances and a malicious desire ‘to get even.’”

Edward K. Apgar of New York stressed the point that as Kelly had failed in his prediction that Tilden would lose New York in 1876, so his present prophecy must fail, “because one hundred thousand New York Republicans propose to vote for Cleveland if nominated.” This was the magnet. The revolt of the Independents presented to the rank and file a vision similar to that of 1882, and the first roll-call disclosed the depth of their faith by giving Cleveland more than a majority. On the second ballot, although a desperate effort occurred to stampede the convention to Hendricks, the New Yorker received 137 votes more than the necessary two-thirds.³ During the demonstration that followed the Tammany leaders disappeared through a side-door exit.

At a later session Thomas A. Hendricks received the nomination for Vice President without opposition.

³	1	2
Grover Cleveland	392	684
Thomas F. Bayard	168	51½
Allen G. Thurman	88	4
Samuel J. Randall	78	4
Joseph E. McDonald	56	1
John G. Carlisle	27	
Scattering	11	
Thomas A. Hendricks		75½
	820	820

Necessary to a choice, 547.

CHAPTER V

A BITTER PERSONAL CAMPAIGN

1884

IN the campaign of 1884 the Republicans stressed civil service reform. Their platform stood for its extension and for the repeal of laws at variance with existing reform legislation. In his letter of acceptance Blaine favoured putting consular officers and secretaries of legations into the classified service, thus exceeding the limits of the most devoted advocates of the reform. George William Curtis spoke of the "ardency" of the candidate, "now that the country has pronounced for the reform, although on the day when the cause was struggling and weak it had no assistance from this always influential political leader."¹

The Democrats pledged "honest civil service reform," and Cleveland considered at length the value of such a reform in the better protection of the people's interests, the improvement of public labour and duty, the abolition of the unseemly scramble for place, and the filling of public departments with subordinates who regard their first duty to serve the people rather than to aid a party. The Republican press thought such a eulogy of its benefits, without indicating a policy, very disingenuous. "The unmistakable purpose of the Democratic party," said the *Tribune*, "is to treat all pledges and all laws with the mental reservation of substituting Democrats for Republicans before fixing a tenure, and its candidate avoids any assurance that the dishonest aims of his party are not his own."²

Upon the important issue of the tariff, the Republican

¹ *Harper's Weekly*, August 2, 1884, p. 509.

² *New York Tribune*, August 21, 1884.

platform demanded that duties be levied "not for revenue only, but to afford security to our diversified industries and protection to the rights and wages of the labourer . . . not by the vicious and indiscriminate process of horizontal reduction, but by such methods as will relieve the taxpayers without injuring the labour or the great productive interests of the country." Blaine's letter and speeches still further stressed the protective feature, declaring that during twenty years of protection the country had more than doubled the wealth which existed in 1860. The Democratic platform pledged tariff revision "in a spirit of fairness," affirming that "the necessary reduction in taxation can and must be effected without depriving American labour of the ability to compete successfully with foreign labour, and without imposing lower rates of duty than will be ample to cover any increased cost of production which may exist in consequence of the higher rates of wages prevailing in this country." This language was variously interpreted. William R. Morrison of Illinois, who reported the platform, said it meant tariff for revenue only; Henry W. Watterson of Kentucky, who aided in framing it, thought it "a straddle"; Benjamin Butler of Massachusetts, a third member of the sub-committee, who presented a minority report, pronounced it ambiguous, designed to mean one thing in New York and another in the West and South. George William Curtis wrote: "The platforms of the two parties are practically the same."³

New York Democrats, however, seemed indisposed to discuss the tariff issue, while Cleveland's silence became a salient for attack. "Upon the vital issue which controls the votes of more men than any other," said the New York *Tribune*, "he is compelled, if an honest man, to say frankly by what principles he will be governed, and in not doing it he deliberately chooses to cheat the people, if he can, in order to get office."⁴ Other criticism of the Governor appeared. As a

³ *Harper's Weekly*, July 19,

⁴ August 21.

revelation of his alleged disregard of the interests of the working classes, caustic reviews of his veto of the bill reducing the fare on the elevated roads of New York City became common. Although his disapproval had been based upon the danger of establishing a bad precedent because of the "strike" character of the measure, his opponents accused him of favouring a company full of incurable iniquity and of being insensible to the wrongs of the people. His disapproval of the Tenure-of-Office Bill likewise became a subject for bitter censure. Theodore Roosevelt, after his return from a hunting trip in the West, stigmatised his reasons as "futile and absurd," suggesting that his veto, inspired by his need of Hubert O. Thompson, could be defended only at the expense of his sincerity or judgment. Coming from Roosevelt, whose opposition to Blaine at Chicago the Independents "had watched with an almost holy satisfaction," this severe arraignment of Cleveland in the interest of one whom he regarded "a bad man," had a most telling effect, which the Republican press brought daily to the attention of voters. The harsh condemnation of Thompson and Davidson, published during the preceding spring in the *New York Times* and *Evening Post*, which now supported the Governor, added a sting to the criticism.

Meanwhile the Democratic and Independent press assailed Blaine's connection and business dealings with Josiah Caldwell, president of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company. It was a story full of interest, sometimes tragic, sometimes pathetic, but always human. Although the pre-convention campaign of 1876 had fully exploited it, the publication of the "Mulligan Letters" ⁵ with their sentences of questionable meaning, of undue caution, and broad suggestions indicating cupidity, left room for ugly innuendoes and pungent insinuations. Mention of business dealings with Thomas A. Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and of trading in Northern Pacific securities, evidenced familiarity with

⁵ For full correspondence, see *Harper's Weekly*, September 27, 1884, p. 643.

brokers and the stock market. These old embers the newspapers again fanned into a flame. The charge, however, persistently stressed was Blaine's alleged sale through Thomas A. Scott of seventy-five Little Rock and Fort Smith land-grant bonds of \$1,000 each to the Union Pacific Railroad Company for \$64,000, the bonds being then without market value. It needed no argument to convince any one of intelligence that if the Speaker of the House of Representatives had received such a price for practically worthless securities from a company so frequently favoured by Congressional action, that he had committed, to say the least, a very grave indiscretion. Blaine himself so regarded it, and as soon as he had marshalled his proof he rose in the House to a personal explanation (April 24, 1876) denying that he had anything to do with or interest in the transaction; or that he ever had any business dealings with Thomas A. Scott in connection with any railroad.

In his testimony before the House Judiciary Committee of which Proctor Knott was then chairman, Thomas A. Scott swore that he bought those and other similar bonds of Caldwell, "dealing in them as a railroad man," about a year and a half before the Union Pacific Company took them in consideration for services he had rendered that road while its president from March, 1871, to March, 1872. In his extended examination he gave with great fulness of detail the reasons for their purchase, the occasion and manner of his disposing of them, and the purpose of the Union Pacific Company in taking them at nearly double their market price, adding that Blaine had nothing to do, directly or indirectly, with the transaction. "I never had a transaction with Mr. Blaine in relation to Fort Smith bonds in my life."⁶ Caldwell, being abroad, did not testify, but he corroborated Scott in a cablegram received by Knott on June 1, 1876.⁷

In the presence of such evidence Blaine's friends declared that no one, not previously and recklessly determined to

⁶ House Misc. 176, pp. 47-57.

⁷ *Cong. Record*, August 3, 1876, pp. 5126-28.

hold him guilty, would publish or believe such charges. However, Blaine adjured Reid of the *Tribune* to "agonise more and more on the tariff issue," insisting that the virulent campaign of defamation sourced in the bolt of free-trade Republicans and in the collapse of the Morrison bill. Yet in the absence of any explanation from Blaine as to what he did do with those bonds, his adversaries insisted that he must have sold them to the Union Pacific, since the coincidence of events furnished the strongest probabilities of such disposal. Moreover, they thought Scott's testimony inconsistent with much of the other evidence.⁸

While these attacks upon Blaine filled the columns of the Democratic press, a Buffalo journal gave wings to a story affecting the moral character of Grover Cleveland. He had settled in that city at the age of seventeen, the son of a Presbyterian minister, making his home with an uncle, Cyrus F. Allen, an honoured citizen. He studied law, was admitted to the bar, and after holding several public offices with credit, had become the head of a leading law firm. His brother lawyers knew him as a hard-working, highly successful attorney, resolute, and absolutely honest. Moreover, he had the respect of the people, whatever their creed or party. His public life furnished no peg upon which to hang criticism; and his campaigns for mayor and governor developed nothing censurable. But he did not dodge the incriminating story. When asked what should be said in reply, he answered: "Tell the truth." And it was told by Roswell L. Burrows, an attorney of the highest character, whom Cleveland had directed to take charge of the illegitimate infant of doubtful paternity. By permission of the mother, Burrows placed the boy (September 14, 1874) in the Protestant Orphan Asylum, of which he was a trustee. Some months later the mother took him, but Burrows, finding her too ill properly to care for herself or the child, replaced the latter in the asylum (July, 1876) and the mother

⁸ *Blaine's Record*, published by the Boston Com. of One Hundred, p. 4.

in the Providence Hospital.⁹ Subsequently the boy was adopted by one of the best families of Buffalo and the mother, a handsome woman, returned to her relatives in the East and became a reputable member of society.

Notwithstanding this plain statement of the "truth," disreputable misrepresentations and disgusting distortions continued. In the heat of a political campaign it is rare, perhaps, that the representatives of any party strive to be judicially fair, and of some of the writers and speakers in the canvass of 1884 it may be said, as Beauclerk said of the friends of Boswell: "If they had excellent principles they did not wear them out in practice." Yet Cleveland had already justified the withdrawal of Tilden in his favour. That he was daily gaining in strength as a candidate was indicated by Stalwart dissatisfaction, especially rife around Utica, the stronghold of Conkling, and alarmingly large in New York City. "In the clubs," it was said, "it was hard to find any one who proposed voting for Blaine."¹⁰

Throughout the campaign Governor Cleveland gave little or no heed to the disturbing conditions. With his usual care and patience he performed the daily duties which made up the routine work of a Governor. Occasionally he went fishing for a day. Nor did he omit to take his vacation in the Adirondacks. Indeed, aside from his formal letter of acceptance he limited his public part in the campaign to two brief addresses, one at Bridgeport, Connecticut, the other at Newark, New Jersey, in which he insisted that "the people have a right to demand that no more money be taken from them, directly or indirectly, for public uses, than is necessary for an honest and economical administration of public affairs." Nevertheless, he did not neglect his own interests. He rarely interfered in the routine of the chosen management, but with the larger ideas he was the leader. Even Samuel J. Tilden, for whom he entertained the highest re-

⁹ New York *Evening Post*, August 5, 1884 (editorial).

¹⁰ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. 2, p. 96.

gard by reason of his financial opinions, and who had rallied all his distinctive friends to the Governor's support, was not permitted to change either the arrangement or the tone of his letter of acceptance as it had been drafted in the silence of the North Woods.

Although the election in Maine (September 8) resulted in the largest Republican majority given in that State since the Civil War, followed by a flattering Republican vote in Ohio (October 14) the loss of Indiana by a small margin indicated that the Prohibitionists, under the leadership of John P. St. John, the popular Governor of Kansas, were recruiting their ranks from Republican sources. In her fascinating speech supporting St. John's candidacy, Frances E. Willard called him "the Pathfinder—the John C. Fremont of the new hope," whom she first remembered as "a little man, a barefoot boy, with feet of tan," making his way toward the West; then, as a student of Blackstone and Kent during hours that other young men slept; and later, as a volunteer, "baring his breast to the enemy then, who is the friend of to-day." Her appeal and his character had aroused the country, making doubtful States more doubtful.

Benjamin F. Butler's campaign as the candidate of the labour and anti-monopoly party, which appealed to workmen who favoured a protective tariff, also cast a cloud-shadow over the situation. John Kelly secretly, if not openly, favoured him, while Thomas F. Grady, still smarting under Cleveland's request to Kelly to eliminate him from the Senate, disturbed Democrats with his passionate utterances as he toured the State not less than the cool, indifferent attitude of former Senator Conkling distressed Republicans. But the most disturbing incident, and perhaps the most disastrous in its influence, occurred at the very close of the campaign. In all the larger cities visited by Blaine during his extended tour East and West, the custom obtained of inviting clergymen to meet him. Such an assembly, representing ministers of all denominations, gathered at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York on October 29, when the

Reverend Burchard, an inconspicuous divine, began reading in a very low tone an address in which he said: "We are Republicans, and don't propose to identify ourselves with a party whose antecedents have been rum, Romanism and rebellion." Mr. Blaine did not instantly take in the full import of the intolerant alliteration, or seize upon the need for its summary repudiation; but his opponents, quick to take advantage of the offensive words, credited him with being their author and flashed the falsehood over city and country. A day or two afterwards he denied the charge with much feeling. "I am the last man in the United States who would make a disrespectful allusion to another man's religion . . . for though Protestant by conviction and connected with a Protestant church, I should esteem myself of all men the most degraded, if, under any pressure or under any temptation, I could in any presence make a disrespectful allusion to the ancient faith in which my revered mother lived and died."¹¹ But it was too late to arrest the mischief. The unfortunate day closed with a business man's dinner at Delmonico's, attended by Jay Gould and other "millionaires."

A few days later it became known that Cleveland had secured 219 electoral votes and Blaine 182, since the former had carried New York by 1,047 plurality out of a total vote of 1,200,000. This small margin created intense excitement, giving rise to much speculation, and provoking the charge that Blaine was counted out.¹² Roosevelt's piquant, snapshot statement, however, presented too many valid reasons for such a suspicion to find acceptance. "A combination of untowardness did it," he said. "If the Conkling wing of the Stalwarts had been true; if Burchard's terrible alliteration had not been sprung; if that 'soap' dinner at Delmonico's had not come off; and if the Prohibitionists had been as

¹¹ *New York Tribune*, November 3, 1884.

¹² A searching review of the facts and figures in the *North American Review* for January, 1914, disproved such a suspicion, which long obtained.

honest as they claimed, Blaine would have won.”¹³ Mr. Blaine, in an amusing letter, summed it up more succinctly: “As the Lord sent upon us an Ass in the shape of a Preacher and a rainstorm to lessen our vote in New York, I am disposed to feel resigned to the dispensation of defeat which flowed directly from those agencies.”¹⁴

¹³ New York *Tribune*, November 17, 1884.

¹⁴ *McClure's Magazine*, January, 1896.

CHAPTER VI

EVARTS DEFEATS MORTON FOR UNITED STATES SENATOR

1885

THE defeat of Blaine had left the party in New York without an accepted organising head. Thomas C. Platt, though loyal in the campaign, had not been cordially welcomed by the Blaine leaders, and it required no political prescience that his leadership, if he regained it, must be through former Governor Cornell and other Stalwart friends who had supported him for senator in 1881. Moreover, it disturbed him that James D. Warren, the Buffalo publisher and ever wakeful head of the State Committee, enjoyed the confidence of many in the Arthur as well as the Blaine factions, and that a disposition existed to unite these elements. But Platt did not wait for union. That ceaseless worker began at once to secure the election of George Z. Erwin as Speaker of the Assembly, which met on January 1, with the hope of strengthening an ambitious plan that included Levi P. Morton for United States senator to succeed Eldridge E. Lapham in March, Alonzo B. Cornell for governor in the fall, and himself for senator in 1887 in place of Warner Miller.

Warren, who favoured President Arthur for senator, immediately announced Walter Hubbell of Rochester for Speaker, while the friends of Leslie M. Russell of Ogdensburg, until recently the popular attorney-general, named Newton W. Curtis, the one-eyed hero of Fort Fisher. Thus the campaign for Speaker became a preliminary contest for senator. Against the candidates personally nothing could

be said. But Hubbell's candidacy in the interest of the President quickly withered under the blight of Arthur's conduct in the late campaign. The Blaine folks charged that he had been a communicant of the church of Laodicea. Whatever the truth, it led to Hubbell's withdrawal and the announcement that the President was not a candidate for senator. This opened the way for Erwin, whose essential genius manifested itself in speech. His activity in aiding Roosevelt's reform legislation also added to his winning prestige.

In the opinion of Platt, Erwin's triumph settled the senatorial election. No one questioned Morton's fitness for senator. Quiet, courteous, generous, and accessible, he seemed to avoid class distinctions and to make the poor his friends. As easily he found favour with all types of local political leaders. His successful campaign for Congress in 1879 and his virility in the canvass of 1880, revealing shrewdness, tact, a perfect knowledge of men, and an ability to talk effectively without assuming to be a popular orator, indicated as natural an aptitude for politics as for business. Indeed, it was plain that an ambition to hold high public office prompted him to pursue the same thorough, systematic methods which had brought success in financial affairs. Senator Conkling understood this, and to retain him as a loyal, generous member of the Stalwart organisation he sought his election to the Senate in 1881 instead of Platt. Failing in this he asked President Garfield to appoint him secretary of the treasury. The President, however, made him Ambassador to France, where he achieved, through brilliant social functions and the most assiduous personal attention to President Gambetta, diplomatic successes denied his predecessors, notably a revocation of the decree prohibiting the importation of American pork and the removal of strictures which hindered Americans in the collection of their debts in the French Republic. His early return to the United States, rendered certain by the election of President Cleveland, made Platt eager to put him under

fresh obligations. It would aid materially in his election, Platt believed, because he had contributed liberally to the Blaine campaign and had endeavoured to secure Conkling's active interest.

Nevertheless, the friends of President Arthur as well as the followers of Senator Warner Miller deemed it inexpedient to rehabilitate the Stalwart machine by Morton's election, and at an early conference they proposed William M. Evarts as a compromise candidate. The suggestion did not excite great enthusiasm. Although every one recognised him as the leader of the New York bar, who had defended President Johnson in the great impeachment trial, had appeared for President Hayes before the Electoral Commission, and had wrung from the Geneva Court of Arbitration a triumphant victory for his country, few of the active politicians of the State knew him personally. As the holder of a cabinet place in two Administrations, he had rarely, if ever, taken part in determining party nominations, or in shaping platforms. He would undoubtedly maintain friendly relations with men and listen attentively to their wants and wishes, but he would do as he pleased. He had refused to sanction the acts of party leaders in the Southern States.

However, Evarts was not without support in the conference. George B. Sloan declared the public should have the use of its ablest men, and Evarts would be a fit successor to Seward. He was not irritable, or quick to feel his own dignity, or prone to be domineering or overbearing, but known as a man of high honour and amiable temper. He might not make an effective party leader, certainly not as the head of a political machine; yet he would give the Empire State adequate representation in the broad lines of enlightened statesmanship. A conciliatory disposition likewise characterised the remarks of President Arthur's friends, who refused to unite with Platt and Cornell. They earnestly desired Arthur. "He has won the respect of the country," said Andrew S. Draper, the future distinguished commissioner of public education, "and by his admirable

conduct has disclosed rare qualities of heart and head. But since the Blaine legislators resent his alleged campaign apathy and refuse to support him, Evarts is attractive." Henry Adams thought so. "Generous by nature, prodigal in hospitality, fond of young people, and a born man-of-the-world, Evarts gave and took liberally, without scruple, and accepted the world without fearing or abusing it. His wit was the least part of his social attraction. His talk was broad and free. He laughed when he could; he joked, if a joke was possible; he was true to his friends; and never lost his temper or became ill-natured."¹

Proponents of Russell and Frank Hiscock of Syracuse, nursing the hope that eventually their candidate might be a compromise choice, spoke evasively. To them the senatorship was a prize to be bargained for, and their chance seemed as good as another's in a Legislature made up of members possessing a limited State acquaintance and little or no legislative experience. Indeed, of the ninety-two Republicans only James W. Husted and Dennis McCarthy represented long service, the former having been sixteen years in the Assembly and the latter ten in the Senate.

In such an assemblage self-interest usually dominates, and so the contest became largely one of persuasion and promises, if not of threats. The better to accomplish their purpose the friends of each candidate established headquarters, with the usual back room. "All the intriguers of the party," said the *Nation*, "are gathered about the table in the inner room of the Morton headquarters except Platt, who rules from his Broadway office." In his absence Alonzo B. Cornell directed the canvass. Among those around him sat John F. Smyth of Albany, unsavoury but keen-eyed; Silas B. Dutcher of Brooklyn, caustic and fearless; Louis F. Payn, with his iron-clad memory, and William W. Rockwell of Glens Falls, who closed an honourable though brief senatorial service after the defeat of Conkling. Coming and going were half a score of skilful politicians of the type of

¹ *The Education of Henry Adams*, p. 244.

Speaker Erwin, Albert Daggett of Brooklyn, Chester S. Cole of Corning, Assemblyman Barnum of a distinguished Civil War record, and J. Sloat Fassett, a vigilant scout, just then widening his political activities.

Evarts did not appear in Albany, but "I'm in to beat or to be beaten," he said. "It's the thing I've been doing all my life, and the result never disturbs me." In his headquarters were men determined to win. Here Theodore Roosevelt worked with his customary energy. Having announced himself "out of politics," he had refused a nomination to the Assembly and one to Congress, but the candidacy of Evarts aroused the fiery spirit displayed in his efforts to nominate Edmunds for President, and he remained in Albany until the end. Among other men of equal zeal were George West, a manufacturer and banker of Ballston, George B. Sloan of Oswego, and Congressmen Skinner of Watertown, Wadsworth of Geneseo, Payne of Auburn, and Nutting of Oswego, while Anson G. McCook of New York, then secretary of the United States Senate, also took a hand. Appearing from time to time were the Stalwart friends of President Arthur, James D. Warren, a veteran journalist, Andrew S. Draper, then chairman of the State Executive Committee, and George H. Sharpe, who had suggested and secured the nomination of Arthur as Vice President. These three men, widely differing in their characteristics, but upright and high spirited, agreed that Morton must be beaten, and to this end they laboured cordially with their former Half-Breed opponents.

Meanwhile events moved rapidly. The contest, so placidly commenced, suddenly assumed State-wide importance. Public meetings, held in every city and large town, gave opportunity for an expression of public sentiment, their petitions falling like snow upon hesitating legislators. One of these petitions, prepared at Rochester in behalf of Morton, measured one hundred feet in length and contained five thousand signatures, among them many college presidents, eminent churchmen, and persons responsible for the

upkeep of charitable institutions, whose interest seemed to indicate a desire to invite the Ambassador's generosity. "I have no criticism to make of Mr. Morton," said Stewart L. Woodford, in addressing a public meeting at Brooklyn, "but if Mr. Evarts is defeated, it will be said that he did not have the means to support his candidacy, and I want the honours of the State not to be given to millionaires."²

The first show of anger betrayed itself in a virulent circular arraigning Evarts as the attorney of oleomargarine manufacturers. This bit of history, designed to weaken him in Chautauqua and other butter producing counties, brought the reply that Evarts never shut his office door in the face of any one seeking an opinion respecting the constitutionality of a State or Federal law. Then the *New York Times* charged him with an "utter lack of courage and conscience in public affairs," declaring "that in critical and stormy times no public interest is safe, no public cause well served in the hands of the man who timidly shrinks, as Mr. Evarts does, from all rude battling for the right against odds, and joins a progressive and reforming movement only when the majority swings to that side and makes it safe. In other words, Mr. Evarts has ever loved the sunshine. In 1850 he went with the Whigs who yielded everything to the demands of the slave power, and in 1860 he yielded to views which were eminently safe because his friends and neighbours were of that way of thinking. And he still loves the sunshine. If elected he will be a sunshine Senator."³

It was easy to explain that Evarts, a conservative or Webster Whig in 1850, voiced Webster's prophetic vision of the need of safe-guarding the Union by the famous compromises adopted in that year; and that in 1860 he held the view that dominated the Republican party of which he was then a distinguished member. The criticism did not displease Evarts' friends, since it also served to remind a new generation that Seward, when confronted in 1861 with civil war,

² *New York Tribune*, January 11, 1885.

³ *New York Times*, January 16, 1885.

expressed the wish "to make a great compromise like Clay and Webster in 1850,"⁴ while Evarts upheld President-elect Lincoln's opposition to a compromise that proposed to admit slavery to free territories south of the line drawn by the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

The *Times*' article also contributed to draw Warner Miller into the contest. The Senator had declined to take sides as he desired friendly relations with his future colleague; but when the struggle assumed national importance he broke silence, declaring that Evarts was just then needed in the Senate, and that because of his "unswerving party allegiance" fully three-fourths of the Republicans of the State preferred him. This claim of "unswerving party allegiance" nettled Cornell, and he launched a fierce attack. He recalled Evarts' sympathy with President Johnson; his criticism of General Sheridan for obeying the instructions of President Grant in the matter of the Louisiana legislature; his support of Tilden against Dix in 1874; and his responsibility while secretary of state under President Hayes for unseating Republican administrations in Louisiana, South Carolina and Florida, "thus stranding the party from the Potomac to the Rio Grande." To close the impeachment with a sting, the former Governor asked: "When has he ever been a real Republican? He made a Republican speech in 1879, one in 1880, one in 1883, and two in 1884, but at no time in the past twenty years has he been in full sympathy with the party."⁵

This savage arraignment called out the further charge that Evarts had refused to make a speech for Judge Folger in 1882. Cornell's criticism apparently did not disturb the lawyer, but the imputation of infidelity to Folger aroused him, and contrary to his custom he replied, demanding that his letter to Folger be published. "It was a kind letter," he said, "in which I told him that his chances were utterly hopeless and that I might as well address a snowstorm with

⁴ Thurlow Weed, *Autobiography*, Vol. 2, p. 308.

⁵ New York *Times* January 15, 1885.

a view to stopping it.”⁶ This explanation amused the *Nation*. “It is equivalent to saying that party fidelity is to be gauged by the prospects of victory, and that when one’s party candidate has a poor chance of election one is not called upon to stand by him.”⁷

That Evarts failed in his duty to Folger could not be denied, but it was otherwise when Cornell called on him for help. Although President Hayes had removed Cornell as naval officer in order that “the office may be properly and efficiently administered,” Evarts, then secretary of state, responded to his cry of distress, endorsing him for governor and ridiculing Republicans that opposed him.⁸ The *Nation* spoke of his appearance and speech as “indecent,”⁹ and *Harper’s Weekly* was not less severe.¹⁰ Indeed, to befriend Cornell he had made a vicarious sacrifice. To have the former Governor now turn on him with a studied and vituperative criticism aroused Theodore Roosevelt, who thought it came “with peculiarly bad grace from one elected in 1879 solely because of the efforts of Mr. Evarts, whose one speech succeeded in partially removing the bitter anger and discontent that Cornell’s nomination had aroused among many of the best men in the Republican party.”¹¹ He gave a further stab by quoting Blaine’s estimate of Evarts, presented at a dinner given to the former in the preceding October, at which Evarts presided: “It has been my duty,” said Mr. Blaine, “to learn from you, Mr. President, wisdom in public affairs, and to join with my countrymen in ascribing to you not merely the great merit of leadership in the noblest of professions, but to yield our admiration for the singular success which has given to you the opportunity to lead in the three most important cases ever pleaded by a

⁶ *The Nation*, January 22, 1885.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Cooper Union Speech, October 21, 1879.

⁹ October 23, 1879.

¹⁰ November 8, 1879.

¹¹ *New York Tribune*, January 17, 1885.

member of the American bar; first, in resisting your own party in what you regarded the impolicy, if not the madness, of impeaching a President; second, in obtaining from the greatest international tribunal of modern times redress for wrongs to your country growing out of the civil war; and, third, in averting, perhaps, another civil war by pleading for a peaceful settlement of the angriest political controversy that ever arose between parties of the United States.”¹²

These sentences had a ring that stimulated Evarts' friends and weakened Morton's. The announcement of Speaker Erwin's committee appointments, breeding the usual dissatisfaction, also fell upon the ears of assemblymen like clods upon a coffin. It turned the disappointed neutrals into line for Evarts and quickly brought letters of withdrawal from Hiscock and Russell (January 19). The friends of Evarts then claimed 63 of the 92 Republican legislators. Following this crushing statement rumours began to circulate that Chauncey M. Depew was a compromise candidate. It is not easy to say when Depew reached the zenith of his popularity, for he rarely made an enemy and seldom failed to find a friend; but as early as 1885 his charming personality and generous use of railroad passes had made him dangerous in such a contest, and although he promptly declined to be tempted, the menace of a secret ballot made it possible for his beneficiaries to turn the caucus into a trading-room. This danger seemed the more threatening since Husted, who had favoured Depew from the first, advocated a closed ballot. On this point precedents conflicted. At the nomination of Harris in 1861 and of Conkling in 1867 preliminary ballots were secret, after that open. At the caucus (January 19) Husted declared the later ones contrary to party tradition. In his opinion a caucus was a private meeting where members had a right to express their personal preferences secretly, and if such a ruling obtained, he suggested, many present, perhaps a majority, would prefer Depew to either Morton or Evarts. Senators Coggeshall, Vedder and Fas-

¹² New York *Tribune*, January 17, 1885.

sett supplemented this clever speech with the statement that an open ballot amounted to the suppression of free action. Advocates of Evarts pronounced it unfair, unmanly, and cowardly to hide behind a secret ballot. Nothing which concerned the public should be done in the dark.

On a motion to proceed with an open ballot a roll-call revealed 64 ayes to 28 noes. The "noes" represented Morton's original strength. How closely the Evarts men had measured their supporters again appeared on the first ballot—Evarts 61, Morton 28, Depew 3. Of those who favoured an open ballot two voted for Morton and two for Depew, while of those approving a secret ballot one voted for Evarts and one (Husted) for Depew. "The Guard dies, but never surrenders," remarked Senator Vedder, as he left the caucus. To which Sloan replied: "There arose a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand, and you didn't see it, Commodore." "No," said Vedder, "but we've got drenched, all right. Let's drop in here." The amenities of legislators!

The Democrats cast their votes for former Mayor Edward Cooper of New York.

CHAPTER VII

DAVENPORT'S STRATEGIC NOMINATION FOR GOVERNOR

1885

THE election of Senator Evarts disclosed a surprising weakness in the Platt machine. Although the candidacy of Morton tended to reunite Cornell and Platt, their attitude toward President Arthur offended such virile up-state Stalwarts as Warren of Buffalo and Draper of Albany, whose refusal to accept a discredited leadership practically confined the machine's control to a few Assembly districts within New York City and its vicinity.

Nevertheless, though limited in territory, a body of powerful, Tammany-like men dominated it. Stephen B. French, Suffolk County's leader, distinguished for his disreputable part in the nomination of Folger, remained its nominal or ministerial head, but John J. O'Brien, known as the "boss of the headquarters gang," exercised real authority. He won his spurs as a keen, shrewd, political worker in the eighth Congressional district, becoming a weigher when the Conkling machine made its headquarters in the custom-house during President Grant's first term (1870). Here he remained until obliged, under the reforms of President Hayes, to seek other quarters. Then he became chief of the bureau of elections under the police board. In appearance he was a gentleman of the town,—cool, courageous, well-dressed, of pleasing manners and few words; but when on duty his untiring energy in the work of securing votes at the primaries and at the polls surpassed all others. His lieutenant, Robert McCord, exhibited similar qualities, with extraordinary gifts for obtaining valuable public contracts for the firm of O'Brien, McCord, and Dady.

Bernard Biglin, also closely associated with headquarters, disclosed an activity no less remunerative. He had a good soldier's record, disclosed a vast appetite for politics, and joined the machine as a weigher in 1871. Soon after he appeared as a custom-house cartman, with highly profitable contracts with Castle Garden. He also frequently became an assemblyman from the eighteenth district, which he controlled by means of an unhealthy curiosity to probe into other people's affairs; but he never failed to obey an order received from men higher up. Michael Cregan also had authority. Like Biglin, his soldier's record and political activity early commended him to the machine, and he became a weigher in 1871. He appreciated his opportunities, and in gaining control of the sixteenth assembly district, known as "the tenement plot," he earned the title of "benevolent despot." This delightful testimony entitled him to whatever merit or demerit belonged to the existing system of ward government, although it is hard to say whether O'Brien's or Cregan's tongue was the more vitriolic.

Of higher grade capacity, in a sphere of activity less limited and more independent, Civil Justice "Sol" Smith, a long-headed, quiet man, known as the Warwick of Congressmen, controlled the nineteenth assembly and eleventh congressional districts. To serve under him was a bitter, hard fate for one whom he disliked, but no more obsequious officer obeyed the machine. He not only enjoyed its confidence, but shared the councils of State and National leaders. Jacob Hess, a Jew, was of a different type. He ruined himself without making a fortune in business or a career in politics, but his suave, insinuating manners enabled him to successfully handle any job at conventions or at the polls. For his sturdy loyalty he was finally, in 1885, pensioned as subway commissioner to superintend the burying of wires.

Not less notable was Jacob M. Patterson, a portly police judge, nearly six feet tall, who had great influence on the East Side among the Germans. He was a public speaker,

and, like Hess, a very persuasive talker in council. For many years Patterson, Hess, O'Brien, and Bernard Biglin, known as the "Big Four," acted as the musketeers of a higher intelligence, and after the political collapse of 1882 they continued to dominate a portion of New York City. Their candidates usually became dummies for deals. In the contest for United States senator they readily fell into line for Morton, and in the pending contest for governor their aid could be relied upon to boost any man whom Thomas C. Platt deemed eligible.

But Platt had little power outside the City. Although he voted for Blaine in convention and sincerely supported him in the campaign, he did not receive the welcome of a comrade. "The dominant organisation," he says, "either openly or secretly opposed every political project I might suggest."¹ Morton's staggering defeat for senator also taught him the weakness of his following. Determined to win a place in the sun, however, he proclaimed the belief that the party could elect a governor in November. There were reasons for this faith. The Evarts victory heartened the party, and an increase of two hundred delegates to the State Convention more fully realised a government of the people by the people. The State committee had likewise recommended that all primaries be held on the same day, and that delegates to State conventions be chosen directly by the voters. In the opinion of the Republican press, therefore, the achievement of a victory needed only a sound platform and satisfactory ticket, headed by a business man of the highest integrity, and nominated without any attempt at bossism.

This rosy view of the situation multiplied candidates. Joseph B. Carr, the soldiers' choice, thought his success in 1883 entitled him to the promotion. William H. Seward of Auburn, son of the distinguished secretary of state, and James W. Wadsworth of Geneseo, found many neighbourhood supporters. High hopes existed that the prize might

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 183.

be won by James D. Warren of Buffalo, a popular and a successful journalist, whose skilled leadership as chairman of the State Committee had greatly reduced Democratic majorities in the preceding campaign. After urgent solicitation Cornelius N. Bliss of New York also consented to be a candidate. His name stood for commercial success, abiding fidelity to his party, and unstinted generosity to its treasury.

Platt naturally objected to these candidates. He had never liked Bliss. Against Warren, although a Stalwart, he had imbibed a deep prejudice because of his continued support of Arthur. Wadsworth and Seward had at times also shown a disturbing independence. Even Carr, though a smiling, hand-shaking, sunshine candidate, had ideas of his own in the conduct of a State office. Moreover, all of these men had favoured Evarts for senator, and could hardly be expected to work in harmony with a leader of Platt's characteristics. In fact, with the two Senators opposed to him, the election of any one of those named meant a rebuff. As a way out of the difficulty, Senator Fassett suggested his neighbour, Ira Davenport of Steuben. Fassett knew he was not Platt's type of a man, but he seemed to meet the requirements of the progressive and independent elements of the party. Besides, if he desired the election of Evarts, he had taken no part in promoting it. Better still, Davenport was not a stranger to the Republicans of the State. Although not a conspicuous party leader, he had proved in the State Senate a capable and constant hindrance to the lobby. As Comptroller he had also managed the fiscal interests of the State with conceded skill, while his vote and influence as a congressman adhered to the side of economy and protection. He was also widely known as an active promoter of the Soldiers' Home at Bath. Thus his equipment for governor consisted of sterling integrity, proved aptitude for public affairs, and a desire to improve party methods.

Platt made Fassett no pledges. However, he encouraged

the movement, with the hope of using it to prevent the nomination of any one who had laboured for Morton's defeat. The press very early indicated as much.² Davenport himself feared some hocus-pocus, for he charged a friend "to permit nothing which could justify the statement that his candidacy was only a blind for some other man."³ As convention day approached, however, Davenport seemed to drop out of mind. He had, indeed, his loyal friends who supported him with voice and pen; but the campaign centered about Warren and Carr and Bliss. The former's plain, undemonstrative manners, supplemented by an attractive personality, filled his office with ambitious young men, then coming into political notice, who visited all sections of the State in his interest. Carr, a Civil War soldier, caught the rank and file. Although his success in 1883 was wholly due to Purcell's and the brewers' dislike of Maynard, yet his popularity, especially with the veterans, could not be disputed. Nevertheless, the party leaders looked askance. To them Warren and Bliss were the men of poise and executive strength.

When the delegates reached Saratoga, however, a dense fog seemed to have settled over the situation. The absence of Platt; the refusal of John J. O'Brien, who represented one-third of the New York delegation, to enter a conference looking towards the support of Bliss; the presence of Cornell, with Silas Dutcher and other former appointees who urged repairing the "mistake of 1882"; the activity of Jacob Hess, insisting on harmony and advocating Morton; the mysterious language of Jacob Patterson, recalling Napoleon's maxim of "never doing what your enemy wishes you to do"; the profound silence respecting Davenport—all these incidents puzzled the up-state delegates. O'Brien, Hess and Patterson understood the scheme, but the canvass as conducted by Warren and other former supporters of Evarts did not indicate knowledge. Indeed, the day the

² New York *Tribune*, August 10, 1885.

³ *Ibid.*, September 21, 1885.

convention assembled (September 22) Carr beamed with confidence, while Warren, Bliss and Seward, men of stronger character, whose judgment had often tempered and sometimes guided the party's policy, believed in their success whenever the break from Carr came. It greatly encouraged Bliss that Theodore Roosevelt had hurried from the Dakota cattle-ranch to urge his nomination, and though O'Brien refused to confer, the brown and sinewy cowboy stubbornly continued his activities, appealing to John Swinburne of Albany, Joseph Drexel of New York, and Henry R. Low of Orange, eleventh hour candidates, who stalked for Morton. He also visited the crowded headquarters of Cornell, but found a disposition to open the old scandal by pressing the former Governor's nomination. Of Ira Davenport little was heard. No one seemed to talk of him. The New York press good-naturedly suggested that Fassett brought "the boom" to Saratoga in his vest pocket and had kept it there.

Although the gubernatorial situation bewildered most of the astute delegates, the convention opened with great enthusiasm. James D. Warren's appearance provoked applause. Cheers also greeted the announcement of Warner Miller for temporary chairman, followed by a warmer welcome as Cornell escorted the Senator to the platform. But the impressive scene, blending muffled applause with waving of flags, occurred when the Chairman, pointing to the draped portrait, referred with deep feeling to the death of General Grant in the preceding month. At that moment there were no Half-Breeds or Stalwarts. No man since the death of Lincoln had filled so conspicuous a place in the public mind. He had a kindly heart, and bore no malice. After the long, patient suffering of his last illness, he could hardly be said to have an enemy in the world.

The presentation of candidates gave no clue to the favourite. Each name, with the exception of Warren's, received little more than a perfunctory greeting. But the first ballot, though it decided nothing, produced a tremendous surprise as the secretary announced the Davenport

vote.⁴ He had cut into Warren in the western counties, into Seward in the interior, and into Bliss in New York. Although Carr led and Warren stood second, deep significance attached to the sudden friendly expression for Davenport. Warren quickly discovered its meaning, and fearing a stampede when the expected break from Carr occurred, he warned his friends to prevent Davenport's nomination on the next ballot. When the break came, however, most of Carr's delegates, seeing the votes of Morton, Drexel, and Low going to Davenport, followed suit. Then came the withdrawal of those candidates and a motion to nominate Davenport by acclamation. It was plain then that the other candidates had waited too long to bunch their strength, and Warren, Seward, and Bliss joined in making Davenport's nomination unanimous amidst tremendous applause. Thus the Platt-Cornell leaders had brought about, by an artistic piece of strategy, the nomination of a man guiltless at least of promoting the defeat of Morton in January. It added to the interest of the situation, also, that "no suspicion existed of complicity or pledges or understandings of any kind upon the part of Davenport."⁵ Moreover, said Depew, "Davenport has never been offensively identified with factional warfare in the Republican party."⁶

The convention quickly finished its work. A hitch for treasurer and two ballots for attorney-general interrupted other nominations by acclamation, but the list, when completed, carefully represented every part of the State.⁷ "It is a ticket," said the *Times*, "which invites and deserves

⁴ The first ballot stood as follows: Carr, 205; Warren, 137; Davenport, 105; Seward, 57; Bliss, 53; Morton, 42; Drexel, 37; Swinburne, 32; Low, 16; Scattering, 9. Total, 693. Necessary to a choice, 347.

⁵ *Harper's Weekly*, October 3, 1885.

⁶ *New York Tribune*, September 24.

⁷ Governor, Ira Davenport, Steuben; Lieutenant-Governor, Joseph B. Carr, Rensselaer; Comptroller, James W. Wadsworth, Livingston; Secretary of State, Anson B. Wood, Wayne; Attorney-General, Edward B. Thomas, Chenango; Treasurer, Charles Ulrich, New York; Engineer and Surveyor, William B. Van Rensselaer, Seneca.

not merely strict party endorsement, but the support of all citizens who put the right of private judgment above party fealty, and are accustomed to measure a candidate's deserts solely by the standards of character and fitness." ⁸

The platform specifically accentuated the importance of civil service reform and protection to American labour. It arraigned the National Administration for its weakness regarding the currency as well as its hostility to American shipping, and criticised Governor Hill's action on the Census and Brooklyn Reform bills. Although the platform was adopted unanimously, the civil service plank, preferring veterans to civilians with higher ratings, proved highly disconcerting to many delegates, who regarded it as an insult to the young men of New York and to the gallant, patriotic, and intelligent soldiers; "but the fact," said George William Curtis, "that public opinion compels the convention to adopt the declaration of the platform unanimously and to nominate a candidate who represents it, shows extraordinary progress of the good cause." ⁹

⁸ *New York Times*, September 24, 1885.

⁹ *Harper's Weekly*, October 3, 1885.

CHAPTER VIII

GOVERNOR HILL'S GREAT VICTORY

1885

FROM the moment David B. Hill became Governor in January, 1885, he began a thorough and systematic canvass to succeed himself in November. He was not a stranger to the people of the State. His taste for politics led him very early to take an active part in local campaigns, and in 1865, at the age of twenty-two, the next year after his admission to the bar, Elmira elected him city attorney. In 1868 he became a delegate to the Democratic State convention; in 1870 and 1871 he served in the Assembly; and in 1877 and again in 1880 the State convention honoured him as its chairman. In 1882 his city made him its Mayor, and on election day of that year he received a larger plurality for lieutenant-governor than Cleveland polled for governor.

Outside of Elmira, however, he had not exhibited exceptional gifts as a political leader. It had been his habit to follow. In the Assembly he supported Tweed until the latter's exposure, after which he transferred his allegiance to Tilden, winning the great lawyer-politician's friendship by a faithful performance of the duties entrusted to him. He bore honourable part in the trial of Judge Barnard, the willing tool of Tweed; in the nomination of Governor Robinson; and in Tilden's contests with Tammany Hall. His failure in 1875, however, to accept membership on the commission appointed by Governor Tilden to provide a uniform charter for the cities of the State, of which William M. Evarts was chairman, did not commend him to forceful, earnest men. Nor did his blunder as chairman of the State convention in 1877, by which Tilden lost control of the convention and of the party machine for three years, inspire

confidence in his parliamentary acumen. Yet Tilden favoured his nomination for governor in 1882. But Manning preferred Cleveland, and to secure for himself second place Hill cunningly divided Chemung's three delegates equally between the three gubernatorial candidates. It was intelligible if not manly.

As Lieutenant-Governor he broadened and strengthened. He measured the spirit of Manning's control. He cultivated the company of a group of young Democrats who held office and resided in Albany, known as the "kitchen cabinet," among whom he became a popular, stimulating influence. To these active, virile men, many of whom became his life-long friends, he preached party regularity, the management of men, and reliance upon a personal organisation. Generally speaking Tilden depended upon opportunity, Cleveland upon issues, and Manning upon trades and methods necessary to meet present party conditions. But Hill believed in a permanent machine composed of men moved like himself by self-interest, who, in conventions and on election days, could produce majorities. Whatever he did, therefore, smacked of faction as well as partisanship. His ruling, which afterwards became famous, that as president of the Senate he had the right, for the purpose of making a quorum, to count members present who did not vote, received slight notice at the time, since the opinion obtained that it was simply a partisan device to capture a petty office.¹ In his desire to become Governor it was natural, perhaps, that he should be the first to suggest Cleveland for President, and that he should fix the delegates in the southern tier counties for that purpose.

On becoming Governor, he began at once to move on lines that made for independent leadership. His message to the Legislature encouraged class legislation, advocated a bill for the freedom of worship, and opposed contract labour in prisons. To secure patronage in New York and other large

¹ Delivered March 13, 1883. Cited by Speaker Reed in the Congress, January 30, 1890.

centres of population, he recommended the appointment of census enumerators by county clerks, and vetoed the census bill of 1885 because it ignored his request. At the instance of Hugh McLaughlin he disapproved the abolition of an extravagant fee system in Brooklyn. To every one he announced hostility to civil service reform, and by his vetoes exhibited an interest that betrayed narrow sympathies. When the Legislature adjourned he appeared in the important cities and towns of the State, soliciting the aid of men in support of his nomination. He did not gush. To casual observers he seemed reserved, if not cool. He had a waxen pale complexion, a round, bald head, and a thick neck, scarred by a gash made in youth. Of his deep-set, bluish-gray eyes, placed close to his nose, a townsman said: "They are restless, glittering, cunning eyes, that under the direct look even of a casual observer wander uneasily, as if consciously unwilling that their depths should be explored."² But he had a pleasant voice and was ready at repartee. He tickled local leaders with round-trip passes, stimulated country editors with tempting promises, and made himself agreeable at fairs and funerals. He could truthfully say that he had treated every Democrat of local prominence with polite consideration, and that his notebook, always at hand, registered every leader of importance.

Very naturally Hill did not please Hubert O. Thompson, who assumed, during Whitney's and Manning's absence as cabinet officials in Washington, the active management of the County Democracy, and with his usual energy he began casting about for a proper candidate for governor. Although his political methods differed little from those of John Kelly, Thompson's prestige imparted confidence in his leadership. Under Manning he had shown peculiar strength in marshalling his forces to overcome weak points, and with apparently the same wisdom he now began to prepare for the forthcoming State convention. Though the County Democracy was a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde organisation, being an

² *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 3, p. 26.

admirer of real statesmanship and a practitioner of questionable methods, it had controlled the State through Manning's machine for three years, holding Tammany by the throat, placating McLaughlin with a share of the spoils, and occasionally tickling Irving Hall with a juicy plum. It had also strengthened the party by its action at Chicago and at the polls in 1884. It now proposed to uphold the President by electing a governor in full sympathy with his administration.

Thompson talked of Edward Cooper, the former Mayor, son of Peter Cooper, the distinguished philanthropist. When he proved unacceptable, reliance upon Cooper's brother-in-law, Abram S. Hewitt, stimulated confidence. Hewitt belonged among the most successful business men of New York. He became the pioneer maker of materials for fire-proof buildings, and introduced the "open hearth" process in the manufacture of steel. His political career had proven no less remarkable. Entering Congress in 1874 his practical views respecting finance, labour, and the development of natural resources attracted wide attention. As chairman of the Democratic National Committee he encouraged the boldest action in the crisis of 1876, vigorously insisting that the electoral vote be counted in accordance with the long established custom. He supported Cooper as an independent candidate for Mayor (1879), and after the latter had stripped Kelly of patronage, Hewitt, at the head of the Committee of One Hundred, completed Tammany's humiliation by depriving it of control in conventions.

With such a statesman for Governor, Thompson entirely ignored the candidacy of David B. Hill. Although he knew that the Governor, in common with machine men generally, held civil service reform in contempt, and that several local up-state leaders had signified their dislike of Cleveland, he assumed that the President's friends remained loyal, while he relied with confidence upon the delegates in and about New York City, who had betrayed no choice for a candidate other than Hewitt. He counted, too, upon the party's de-

pendence on the County Democracy for sufficient campaign funds. To ignore its wishes seemed equivalent to inviting bankruptcy. In such blissful ignorance did Thompson remain until the arrival at Saratoga (September 24) of up-state delegates revealed the extent of the Cleveland defection. To add to his consternation the Tammany and Irving Hall delegations, when informed of the exact conditions, caught a vision of the County Democracy's overthrow by promptly swinging into line for Hill. If further evidence of Hill's popularity were needed, the faint applause for the President and the vociferous cheers that greeted the mention of the Governor furnished it. The greatest demonstration of the day, however, occurred when Bourke Cockran presented Hill's anti-civil service resolution.

By this time Thompson understood that he must fight or graciously surrender. For him a death-bed repentance meant nothing, whereas a refusal to vote for Hill might secure vantage-ground for an appeal to the Independents to support his City ticket in a triangular local contest. So he chose to fight, and to gain time D. Cady Herrick, chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, moved a recess. The convention insisted upon the immediate nomination of a Governor, and with roll-calls and long speeches the filibuster lasted far into the night, the motion finally being lost, 148 to 232. But the talk continued. A delegate suggested that if time were given, Roswell B. Flower might be persuaded to accept second place. This pleased Hill since Flower could supply a campaign fund if the County Democracy withheld it. The convention, however, refused to swallow the tempting bait, and a motion to proceed to a nomination, coupled with the previous question, brought a second roll-call, which stood 240 to 139. Then the chairman ruled out of order a motion to adjourn, and on an appeal a third roll-call resulted 270 to 109. This showed Hill's absolute control of the convention.

It was midnight when John I. O'Connor, a liquor dealer of Elmira, amidst loud applause and the waving of banners

and hats, compared David B. Hill to Thomas Jefferson, and declared him stronger than his party. Daniel N. Lockwood seconded the nomination. Others followed with profuse eulogies, after which John R. Fellows, with a voice and diction that quieted the tumult, took the floor for Abram S. Hewitt. Hewitt had received marked attention. An outburst of applause had greeted his entrance, with repetitions whenever he voted; but now the demonstration seemed more energetic, the County Democracy rising to its feet and cheering long and lustily. Fellows, however, was not deceived. He said he knew the convention would not accept Hewitt, but he declared him the kind of man who ought to be a Governor. The moderation and perfect candour that tempered his speech exalted his candidate as he gracefully unfolded the sterling character and useful career of a life true to principle and free from trickery and demagogic appeal. But it changed no one. As the roll-call proceeded cheers for Hill came in one continuous stream, the vote standing, Hill, 338; Hewitt, 33; Slocum, 8; Flower, 1. But no attempt occurred to make it unanimous.

To old politicians, even to those favourable to Hill, the reason for such strength seemed a mystery. Men had been nominated for governor upon the first ballot, some by acclamation, others by the tact of astute leaders, but such nominees, like Seymour, Kernan, Tilden and Robinson, had exhibited gifts of statesmanship and grasp of public affairs. Now they saw a man, with a career that indicated few, if any, of these qualifications, suddenly control a convention with the grip of Silas Wright, the brightest star in the galaxy of Democratic governors. Nor did it please the Independents. "The nomination of a trickster and demagogue like David B. Hill," said the *Times*, "is an act of amazing political insanity. Possessed with the spirit of Beelzebub and led by Tammany Hall, the convention rushed violently down a steep place into the sea. The choking will be attended to on the third of November."³

³ New York *Times*, September 25, 1885.

The completion of the ticket developed cross-purposes. To reach Flower's "barrel" the convention nominated him for lieutenant-governor, but he declined the honour. "No flowers at this funeral," said the saucy Thompson. General Slocum, the famous corps commander, likewise refused. This opened the way for Edward F. Jones, formerly colonel of the Sixth Massachusetts, whom his opponents charged was neither a leader in war nor effective in peace. But Hill demanded a soldier to offset General Carr.⁴ Last of all came the platform. It praised the Governor; approved civil service in theory; pledged a revision of the tariff "in a spirit of fairness to all interests"; opposed contract convict labour in any form; prohibited employment in industrial establishments of children under fourteen years of age; gave preference to veterans under civil service rules, and opposed all sumptuary laws "that interfere with the constitutional right of personal liberty."

The campaign did not start well for the Governor. The opposition of the Independents and the defection of the County Democracy seemed sufficient to block success. Moreover, it appeared that Tweed, in the summer of 1870, after securing with Hill's aid the passage of his New York City charter, invested \$10,000 in *Elmira Gazette* stock at par, then owned in part by Hill, which he afterwards resold to Hill and his associates for fifty cents on the dollar. It further appeared that the Tweed legislature had resuscitated certain outlawed flood-claims, represented by Hill as attorney, and had appropriated \$85,000 for the payment of damages awarded by a Tweed-appointed Commission, of which amount Hill received one-half as his fee. In a subsequent investigation of the matter, Hill testified that the State, charged with negligence in causing the flood, was

⁴ The ticket thus made up was as follows: Governor, David B. Hill, Chemung; Lt.-Gov., Edward F. Jones, Broome; Secretary of State, Frederick Cook, Monroe; Comptroller, Alfred C. Chapin, Kings; Attorney-General, Denis O'Brien, Jefferson; Treasurer, Lawrence J. Fitzgerald, Cortlandt; Engineer and Surveyor, Elnathan Sweet, Albany.

unrepresented by an attorney or witness when proof was made and the damages assessed. "Such a beneficiary of Tweed," said the *Tribune*, "can never be elected Governor of the Empire State."⁵

As conducted in the press the campaign became bitterly personal. Day after day Hill's relations with Tweed and the ancient canal claims filled the news and editorial columns of the leading Republican papers. Every phase of these transactions came into the limelight, columns of testimony being printed in proof of the alleged fictitious claims. Excuses offered in extenuation, especially the plea of youth, excited ridicule. "If too young at twenty-seven, when, if ever," it was asked, "would he be old enough to know right from wrong?" It added derision to the so-called "baby-plea" that his service as district attorney preceded his acquaintance with Tweed and the canal claims.

Very naturally Hill's friends began studying the early career of Davenport. His connection with the Pleasant Valley Wine Company promised to offend the Prohibitionists until the pathetic and charitable side, revealed by an investigation, showed that he owned no stock, and that his management sourced in a desire to protect the interests of a widow and her four children, of whose property he was the administrator, and from whom he received no pay for his services. Of a more acrid character was the criticism of his vote as a State Senator, acquitting a Republican superintendent of insurance, charged by Governor Robinson with malfeasance. No facts were in dispute. It involved simply a question of judgment. The *New York Times*, agreeing with the Governor, declared that "no senator so voting should ever after secure a position of public trust."⁶ Now, however, the *Times* actively supported Davenport, and its former statement became the text for bitter attack. Matters of an intra-party nature also troubled Davenport. His campaign contribution fell below expectation, his refusal to

⁵ *New York Tribune*, September 25, October 3 and 5, 1885.

⁶ January 15, 1878.

pledge continuing support to Platt's quarantine system, which a co-commissioner declared "a fraud upon taxpayers," created much resentment,⁷ and his failure to join in a debate with Hill and the Prohibition candidate accelerated the drift to prohibition.

On the other hand, the Governor benefited by the activity of the Prohibitionists, a generous campaign contribution by President Cleveland, and the declaration of the entire Democratic press that his defeat would be a severe rebuke to the Administration. Nevertheless, Hill himself proved his biggest asset. Although neither rhetorical nor magnetic, he was quick to see a point, precise and clear in statement, and copious in diction. He opened his first speech of the campaign with the declaration, "I am a Democrat," and from that moment his welcome to city or town proved an ovation. It became the slogan of his followers, for it meant hostility to civil service reform, acceptance of the old Jacksonian cry "to the victor belong the spoils," an indisposition to companion with Mugwumps, opposition to sumptuary legislation, and resistance to the known policies of Davenport.

Of the two, Hill's was the stronger personality. Davenport had character enough. His candour and fairness, his fidelity to a high standard of public duty, his ample experience and trained intelligence satisfied the most fastidious critics. The *Times*, a devoted Cleveland adherent, declared him "as good a candidate in every way as the Republican party has presented in this generation."⁸ His career required no apology. But he lacked the art of deeply interesting individuals. His visits failed to stir local managers into a glowing activity for his sake. Some thought him too good, others, too reserved, and all acknowledged that he did not easily attract men. Republicans attended his meetings and politely applauded, but no one laughed or sent up a yell. The next morning people resumed work as usual,

⁷ *Harper's Weekly*, 1885, pp. 3, 18, 67, 130.

⁸ *New York Times*, September 25, 1885.

calling it "a good meeting" and expressing no doubt of the candidate's election.

The Governor's presence brought out more colour and more noise. Expectancy filled the air and a mixed crowd filled the hall. After his departure groups of men gathered on the corners or elsewhere, and talked of the strength and expanding leadership of "Dave" Hill. One spoke of his courage, another of the elaborateness of his preparations, another of his fund of humour, and others of the tact and skill with which he presented the issues. Could it be, they mused, that this is the man, who, only a few years ago, was buying negro votes in Elmira's old, disreputable Third Ward? They sensed a new power, some more vividly than others, but all recognised that a growing influence had come into their midst. And yet no one within or without the party then dreamed that the Governor was soon to become one of the most conspicuous figures in American life, and would exercise within the party in the State more real power than any other man of his day except President Cleveland and possibly William Jennings Bryan.

Probably the future of no public man in the State ever depended so much on a single event as did Hill's career upon the result of the pending election. If he failed, the obliquities of his early manhood, now so thoroughly exploited, coupled with the oblivion that defeat at the polls usually brings to a candidate for high place, must have proven too great a handicap ever to present him another such opportunity. And it seemed as if defeat awaited him. On October 29, five days before election, the betting in New York stood \$70 to \$100 in favour of Davenport. Nevertheless, the returns soon proved the unreliability of such guideboards. Out of a total vote of 1,024,138, Hill received a plurality of 11,134.⁹ It was not so close as Cleveland's vote

⁹ The Democratic candidates received the following pluralities: Governor Hill, 11,134; Lt.-Gov. Jones, 3,162; Secretary of State Cooke, 14,514; Comptroller Chapin, 11,947; Treasurer Fitzgerald, 11,367; Attorney-General O'Brien, 13,750; Engineer Sweet, 12,251. Two Court-

in the preceding year, but it was small enough to start the wiseacres into giving reasons for Davenport's defeat. Among other causes assigned were apathy, overconfidence, mismanagement, appeals to the "bloody shirt," and lack of funds in certain localities. Great stress was laid, too, upon the persistent declaration of the Democratic press that Hill's defeat would mean the President's rebuke by his own party in his own State in the first year of his administration. These reasons, especially the last, undoubtedly contributed. The returns also showed an abnormal increase of Prohibitionists, who greatly benefited, through the generosity of the Democratic State Committee, by the use of brass bands, special excursion trains, and other expensive adjuncts hitherto esteemed the property of machine rather than moral politics.¹⁰ Hill ascribed his election to prohibition and Alton B. Parker, his campaign manager.

of Appeals judges had no opposition. The Legislature stood: Senate, 21 Republicans, 11 Democrats; Assembly, 75 Republicans, 53 Democrats. Average plurality of Tammany's ticket, 11,000.

¹⁰ The Prohibition vote in 1882 was 25,783; in 1883, 18,816; in 1884, 25,001; and in 1885, 30,867.

CHAPTER IX

HEWITT, HENRY GEORGE, AND ROOSEVELT

1886

As the State election in 1886 was limited to a member of the Court of Appeals, each party, declining to call a convention, accepted the candidate picked by its State committee.¹ Nevertheless, the campaign became notable because organised labour appeared in New York City as an independent party.

As early as 1869 workingmen of different occupations had united for their betterment in an American organisation known as Knights of Labour, which claimed in the middle eighties upwards of half a million members. Other smaller organisations, made up largely of dissatisfied foreigners, had multiplied in cities and industrial centres, some of whose representatives indulged in incendiary talk, resulting in serious strikes and in blood on May 4, 1886, at Haymarket, Chicago. But few, if any, of the organisations had ever appealed to the ballot. In the summer of 1886, however, a petition of twenty-five thousand labouring men, most of them Knights of Labour, requested Henry George to become a candidate for mayor of New York City.

For several years George had been writing and lecturing upon *Our Land and Land Policy*, published in 1870, and on *Progress and Poverty*, which appeared in book form in 1879. He was less than fifty years of age, a Pennsylvanian by birth, a printer by trade, and an editor by profession, with a rare gift for making economic theories attractive to labour. Denying that wages are limited by capital, he

¹ The Republicans selected Charles Daniels of Buffalo; the Democrats, Rufus W. Peckham of Albany.

argued that they are produced by the labour for which they are paid, and that instead of an increase in population causing want, it should tend to greater plenty. Then by an examination of the laws of distribution, in which wages and interest are shown to correlate with the accepted law of rent, he maintained that the increase of land values explains why the increase of productive power so marked in modern civilisation does not commensurately increase wages and interest. He traced the recurring seasons of industrial depression to the steady increase in land values to beget speculation in land, which prevents the application of labour and capital, proposing as a remedy the appropriation of economic rent to public uses by a tax levied on the value of land exclusive of improvements, and the abolition of all taxes which fell upon industry and thrift.

George's lectures became exceptionally popular among the labouring classes, his diction being attuned to their understanding, and his illustrations selected to appeal to their prejudices. To them it was restful and comforting to listen to plans for sweeping away all interference with the distribution of wealth, and taking for the use of the community all wealth that is derived from growth. It would make, he said, Fifth Avenue and other land of rapidly rising value pay the upkeep of a great city. Although he would resort to State control when competition was impossible, he denied being a disciple of State socialism. He would leave to individuals all that individual energy or thrift accumulated, but earnings must be the result of labour, or the direct use of money, thus abolishing wealth required by an overissue of stock or bonds, whose dividends must be paid by exorbitant charges or insufficient service.

It was this captivating theory that stimulated labour's desire to make him a candidate for mayor. He had never held office, and probably never thought of it. Ever since he left California in the sixties he had been a student-writer, a theorist, a dreamer of dreams perhaps, but sincere and honest, of definite aims and urbane manners. Vast numbers

of people had read his books,² had felt his persuasive power of exposition, and had become convinced that although his single-tax idea might be an error, he did not hold it by the strength of a conscious hypocrisy and imposture. No whispered suggestion of a desire for enriching himself at the expense of others found its way to the ear. On the contrary he was classed with Wendell Phillips and other patriotic agitators, who exemplified anew the purifying nature of great political reforms wrought in modern times. Besides workingmen he attracted socialists, philanthropists, and students, who became active propagandists. Anarchists claimed him as a "fellow-worker." Without effort and doubtless without his personal knowledge he seemed to enlist, more largely, perhaps, through selfish than distinterested motives, men of all classes who desired to use him.

Thus, in 1886, Henry George became the celebrity of New York, and early in October the workingmen nominated him for mayor with the enthusiasm of worshippers, on a platform that sounded a note of defiance. "Independent political action," it said, "affords the only hope of exposing and breaking up the extortion and speculation by which a standing army of professional politicians corrupt the people whom they plunder." Further, "that the true purpose of government is, among other things, to give every one security that he shall enjoy the fruits of his labour, to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak, and the unscrupulous from robbing the honest." These thrusts at the policy of corrupt politicians, violent strikers, and avaricious profiteers, induced many of the more intelligent to look with amiable indulgence upon the movement, especially as the platform wisely declared that "the ballot is the only method by which in our Republic the redress of political and social grievances is to be sought."

Such a movement, headed by a candidate who gave it wide-

² His *Progress and Poverty* was published in the Congressional Record, thus becoming a public document which admiring friends mailed by thousands at the expense of the Government.

spread popularity, greatly alarmed Tammany. Although the George platform gracefully veiled its real purpose, the Democrats quickly recognised it as an effort to unite the various labour organisations into a political party which would represent fully one-half of Tammany's vote, thus threatening the sources of its power. It was an hour of peril. John Kelly was in his grave,³ and his successor not yet regularly chosen; but Richard Croker was recognised as the real power behind the throne. In his teens Croker was a machinist; later a professional prize-fighter and Court attendant; at twenty-five, an alderman; at thirty, a coroner; and at forty a fire-commissioner with a seat in Tammany's Council within whispering distance of Kelly. He was now forty-three,—a silent, self-contained, tactful leader, possessing political sagacity, a marvellous knowledge of men, and an unchangeable strength of purpose. Like Kelly he opposed progress, hated reforms, enjoyed the possession of power, and, as a rule, held promises sacred. It could be said to his credit that in 1869 he sided with the Young Democracy against Tweed.

Croker knew that the labour unions, having merged with the Knights of Labour, talked of independent political action, but he did not appreciate that the George movement sourced in the desire of making the workingman's industrial capacity, rather than his wealth, the measure of national and individual value. In fact, he had given no consideration to the question of wages, or to the grievances of the wage-earner, and so, with the vision of a ward politician, he sought to silence the agitation by offering George an office with tempting fees.⁴ The spurning of this bribe taught him that the reforming energy existed both in the conditions and in the man, and determining to suppress it by hook or by

³ Died June 1, 1886. The four men temporarily selected to govern Tammany were Hugh J. Grant, Thomas J. Gilroy, Bourke Cockran and Richard Croker.

⁴ Open letter from George to Hewitt, dated October 17, 1897. Myers' *History of Tammany Hall*, p. 322.

crook at the polls, he began casting about for a candidate who would command the confidence of the business community and the more intelligent labouring classes. He realised that two Democratic candidates, representing rival organisations, would defeat each other, but to select Abram S. Hewitt, upon whom outside sentiment appeared to centre, was unthinkable. Rivalry had been too bitter and enmity too deep. To suggest his name seemed blasphemous. While Croker hesitated, however, the George movement whirled onward, stirring the hearts of the population and drawing all classes into its vortex, until the new Boss, fully realising the threatened danger, surprised the whole city by accepting the head of the County Democracy.

In his letter of acceptance Hewitt spoke without fear or favour. "From the nature of the issue and the unusual manner in which my nomination has been made," he said, "no pledges to any party or set of men have been asked, nor under any circumstances would I make any other pledge than that which I now freely give—that if elected I will discharge the duties of the office according to law, keeping in view the interests of the whole people, without distinction of party or class, and in strict conformity to the spirit of the legislation affecting the civil service, and to the just demands of the great mass of the people for the removal of abuses which impose taxation without corresponding benefit."

A strong sentiment existed against the nomination of a Republican candidate. Hewitt's tariff views could in no wise colour his administration as mayor, while his knowledge of political methods, gained by ten years' service in Congress, would prevent his being swayed by considerations of expediency. For reasons best known to themselves, however, the Platt district managers and a Citizens' Committee of One Hundred, to the deep grief of the friends of reform and to the surprise of most people, nominated Theodore Roosevelt. It seemed like pitting one good man against another to the injury of both and to the danger of the

common cause. The *Nation*, an ardent well-wisher, expressed amazement that Roosevelt "should accept a nomination given him by 'Johnny' O'Brien, 'Mike' Cregan, 'Barney' Biglin, 'Jake' Hess, 'Jake' Patterson, 'Sol' Smith, and 'Steve' French. How is it possible for him to think the 'Johnnies' and 'Jakes' and 'Mikes' sincere, when the investigations and reformatory legislation which he carried through were bitterly opposed and resisted by these very men, some of whom, like French of the Police Commission and O'Brien of the Election Bureau, were part of the things to be reformed. That Roosevelt is put up for a trade is plain, and the better his record and character the better trade can they make."⁵

But Roosevelt was ambitious. Besides, the rough and tumble of such a contest appealed to him. It is doubtful, too, if he rated the "Jakes" and "Mikes" as unreliable as the *Nation* pictured them. Moreover, several astute politicians believed that in a triangular contest, with Henry George drawing heavily from the Democrats, a Republican of approved character could secure a plurality of votes. It was admitted that Roosevelt's services in the legislature entitled him to the honour, and that if elected he would make an ideal mayor. He was a young man, not yet thirty years old, of tested courage and exceptional ability, possessing enthusiasm, active sympathies, ebullient humour, and a passion for sport that specially endeared him to his friends. His photograph, taken at the time for *Harper's Weekly*, represents him as slight but muscular, with thin moustache, short hair, and a youthful face, not yet hardened by the strong lines that subsequently swelled above the eyes and made the half-severe smile disclose the teeth through slightly parted lips. But the square shoulders, the prominent chin, and the eyes that have been described as "cold grey to his enemies, but warm deep blue to his friends," indicated determination and strength.

While the Republican press encouraged the George move-

⁵ Myers' *History of Tammany Hall*, October 21, 1886, p. 324.

ment as the Democratic press in 1884 had favoured the Independents, Roosevelt sought to persuade the more conservative working classes that true reform must come through men who had definite practical aims and deeply rooted convictions for labour's real betterment. He expressed sympathy for the factory child; for the woman, half clad and half fed; for the inmates of overcrowded tenement houses, turned into tobacco factories and poisoned by foul air; and for the honest toiler whose pitiful wage failed to support his dependent ones. He had no theories. He spoke from first-hand knowledge. In his determination to secure, in the legislative session of 1884, the passage of a bill "to improve the public health by prohibiting the manufacture and preparation of tobacco in any form in tenement houses," he had made a personal investigation of conditions in such houses, where a family with several boarders might be found living in one or two rooms, while the manufacture of cigars was being carried on in close proximity to the stove and dining-table. Although the bill became a law, the Court of Appeals had declared it unconstitutional (January, 1885), holding it an improper exercise of the "police power." "It cannot be perceived," said the Court, "how the cigar-maker is to be improved in his health or his morals by forcing him from his home and its hallowed associations and beneficent influences to ply his trade elsewhere."⁶ It is little wonder that Roosevelt's wrath blazed up against a Court that could thus connect the wretched abodes he had visited with the "hallowed associations and beneficent influences" of a home.

His vision indicted those responsible for the existing deplorable conditions which breed discontent, and he advocated the passage of laws which true reformers, if elected to municipal office and to the legislature, could easily enact. No doubt these proposed reforms, encountering the opposition of cheap tenement-house owners and other profiteers,

⁶ 98 N. Y., p. 98, Robert, Earl J.

weakened him, but his bold assaults showed that if ambition prompted his candidacy, it could not bend his principles.

Hewitt, a close student of George's books, knew that a political agitation, based merely upon the barren idealism of land-tenure, could gain no such headway, and began, without subterfuge or false pretence, to analyse the George theories, showing that their success would entail greater miseries on wage-workers than did the existing social and political order. To him George's scheme not only aimed to array class against class on the basis of a poverty qualification, but its central idea permitted men engaged in any particular trade to monopolise the right to carry it on, and whoever attempted to do similar work without their permission must be prevented by law or by force. Against this economic heresy his argumentative power served the great purpose of drawing the attention of the city to the seriousness of the propaganda. Whatever George might have in mind, the use made of his theories spelled danger and disaster.

As the canvass progressed, the most dangerous and disorderly elements, the enemies of public order, adopted George as especially their own. Their presence and hurricane applause seemed to excite as well as cheer him. He boastingly stood for poor men against rich men, for labour against capital, and for a revolt of what he termed "the disinherited classes." He threw off all restraint, spoke without studied preparation, fell into repetition and careless statements, and finally declared that "with all its drawbacks and horrors and shortcomings, the noblest epoch in modern history is the great French Revolution, now but a century gone, which is about to repeat itself here."⁷ When George saw the words in cold type and read the comments of the press, he denied their use. "Were the quotation true," he wrote *Harper's Weekly*, "your artist might with pro-

⁷ New York *Sun*, October 14, 1886. See also New York *Times* and *Herald* of same date.

priety have given me an ass's head." ⁸ To this George William Curtis, quoting the language generally reported in the leading papers, replied: "Mr. George will not forget that the worst crimes of the French Revolution were committed in the name of liberty, equality and fraternity, . . . and no intelligent man, speaking to an excited multitude of less intelligent men, will appeal to the French Revolution as the noblest epoch in modern history without preventing by the most careful discrimination and explanation the disastrous effect which otherwise his words must produce upon such hearers." ⁹

George did, indeed, attempt to correct his language. "Some of you have heard me say," he said, in a subsequent speech, "that this is to be the forerunner of the coming revolution. That revolution is to be a peaceful one. This is a class movement, the uprising of the workingman, the revolt of the disinherited class who claim their share of the wealth their toil produces." ¹⁰ This admission weakened his propaganda, for the moment it became clear that nothing was to be done but agitate, the confessed leaders of discontent and anarchy lost interest. To the more intelligent trade-workers, also, he ceased to be useful, since his speeches disclosed no practical constructive plan. Nevertheless, the momentum of the movement, which George intended primarily for the education of the industrial masses, carried it forward with apparently unabated interest. His audiences held the lead in numbers and in noise. As shown by the returns, the city had become aroused as never before, the total vote of 218,873 exceeding the gubernatorial vote of the preceding year by 19,753. Of the votes cast, Hewitt had 90,466; George, 67,930; Roosevelt, 60,477.

The smallness of Roosevelt's vote caused a genuine surprise. Instead of benefiting by the George movement, he had lost twenty per cent of the Davenport vote. This loss

⁸ *Harper's Weekly*, November 6, 1886.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *New York Sun*, October 15.

had been added to the Hewitt vote, making his election sure. It did not lessen Roosevelt's humiliation, however, who learned then what he was destined years later to learn again, that the division of a party for ambitious or other reasons cannot occur without defeat, although neither side may be guilty of unpatriotic sentiments. It is interesting and significant that Roosevelt, in his autobiography, makes slight reference to his nomination for mayor, while Platt's autobiography is silent upon the subject. Perhaps both were ashamed of it.

CHAPTER X

A FAMOUS BATTLE

1887

THE contest to prevent Warner Miller from succeeding himself as United States senator became an historic one. Platt again swung into line with Levi P. Morton, while Frank Hiscock of Syracuse a second time entered the lists, waiting, Micawber-like, for something to turn up.

In his contest with Evarts in 1885, Platt had shown lamentable weakness in up-state districts. The smash in 1881 put the Conkling machine out of gear, and Platt, without attempting its repair, took the serviceable parts and began making an organisation of his own. It had been slow work. Defeat had followed defeat, until the election of Evarts showed the absolute necessity of perfecting it if he would defeat Miller, whom he held in supreme contempt. Early in the summer of 1886, therefore, he began helping legislative candidates in doubtful districts. Although he made no accounting of the money thus distributed, and did not disclose the source of its supply, it was not unknown to Morton and other intimates. This sub-soil work plainly made a difference in Morton's strength, and when the Legislature convened in January, 1887, Platt claimed to be confident of electing his candidate.

Warner Miller sincerely believed in his star. He had kept the faith, served with approval, and met with courage all attacks upon Republican policies. He had a fine appreciation of high character, believed that a Republican government is a continuous education, and preferred that citizens generally should have a part in the selection of their representatives; but it could hardly be said that he attained a solid success in any one thing. While the value of his presence in the Senate was not unknown to the outside public,

his influence in the State had not wholly satisfied the promise of his earlier years. Perhaps he possessed too little of that acumen which quickly discerns changes and meets them with advantage. Moreover, his service as senator had disclosed a coldness of temperament, reflected in a rather austere diction, which seemed to disqualify him for inspiring a party with that personal enthusiasm which is often essential to victory. Thus his prestige helped him only slightly. He would do, but was not deemed necessary. It counted in his favour, however, that he revealed little liking for the work-a-day, crafty methods characteristic of the machine boss.

Between Miller and Morton stood Frank Hiscock, a man of high character, decided ability, admirably equipped as a debater, and with large experience in public affairs. He had shared the Republican leadership of the House of Representatives with Thomas B. Reed and William McKinley, and in 1881, when his party elected a Speaker for the only time in a period of fourteen years, his vote for that office was not insignificant. But no sentiment supported his candidacy for senator outside of a corporal's guard, headed by Francis Hendricks, a State senator. Hendricks, a cool, obstinate, silent little man, unattractive in person and ungifted in speech, possessed all the qualities that make a natural leader. He mingled freely with men, listening patiently, asking shrewd, root-tapping questions, and committing himself slowly, or never if he thought the cause unlikely to win. Once committed, however, he became a wise pilot, taciturn at the wheel and unresponsive to alarms, but keen, quick-minded, honest and dependable. Although Hendricks' conspicuous public career was largely before him, he was then the absolute ruler of his party in Onondaga County. In State affairs he had associated with Platt's opponents, co-operating with Roosevelt in the Assembly and at various conventions, and if not as broad-minded or true to the principles of reform, he never companioned with his townsman, James J. Belden, a crafty leader of adequate courage.

Hendricks expected, if Hiscock held the balance of power

in the caucus, to benefit whenever Miller and Morton tired of anxious days and sleepless nights, for he believed the Miller delegates could not go to Morton, and that the Morton backers must reject Miller. The friends of Miller naturally resented Hiscock's candidacy as an impertinence, since it divided assemblymen of like sympathies. Hendricks saw it differently. To him Hiscock offered an escape from factional bitterness which Miller's re-election would continue, while Morton's defeat would avoid bunching the United States senators in New York City. Moreover, Hiscock was of full senatorial size, as able, well-equipped, and experienced as either Miller or Morton, and as devoted a Republican.

To this Senator George B. Sloan, the recognised leader of the Miller forces, answered that Hiscock's election would not be a tribute to his personal worth, worthy as he might be, but to the very clever management of Platt, whose purpose primarily was the defeat of Miller. It was not necessary to disparage the ability of either Miller or Hiscock, but Miller offered uncompromising opposition to the spread and strengthening of Plattism, while Hiscock offered Platt not only an escape from a humiliating defeat, but a chance to recover his power by having a friend at court somewhat indebted to him for his election. Sloan added, "that the shrewd, sinister methods of the would-be-boss, judging the future by the past, are not revealed until one finds himself committed to a policy from which he cannot escape. A senator, busy with the country's important affairs, cannot keep track of a man who works at politics day and night, with buried wires, connecting him with every county in the State."

In reply Hendricks declared that Platt could not dominate Hiscock, offering as proof of it the latter's absolute refusal to join in the selection of Morton. However, he will gladly accept the support of the latter's friends. "In other words," said Sloan, "you will not put your head into the lion's mouth, but you will get into the cage with him."

Very naturally the relations between Miller and Hiscock gradually became strained. Their feelings were those of mutual distrust, such as often exists between partners who suspect their losses are due to the mistakes of the other. Meanwhile, the Morton men reduced the struggle to sniping such Miller assemblymen as betrayed a disposition to vacillate—a form of campaign which quickly degenerated into personalities. Miller was pronounced “too cowardly to be a hero, too selfish to be successful, and too slow a thinker to be a satisfactory leader.” On the other hand, the reported use of Morton’s money filled the press.

In the caucus (January 17) the Hiscock and Morton forces united, fixing forty-eight as the minimum vote to nominate, being a majority of all the Republican members. The strength of this fusion became more apparent after the first ballot,¹ for while each side fell one vote short of a sufficient number to nominate, it enabled the combine to adjourn from time to time until the needed one vote could be obtained. These hours of adjournment became nerve-racking, sleepless, and humiliating. “Anything to beat Miller,” was the slogan. Friend pleaded with friend, waverers provoked threats, and espionage kept every member in the limelight.

When the Morton leaders, who had satisfied Platt that their votes must go to Hiscock,² caught the first ray of hope that a Millerite would desert to Hiscock whenever his vote would suffice to nominate him, they held a secret midnight meeting (January 18) and pledged each delegate to vote for Hiscock on the ballot following the withdrawal of Morton’s name. The next morning Morton received the announcement calmly, and soon after called upon Hiscock, assuring him of his high personal esteem. “If my supporters regard

¹ Miller, 44; Morton, 35; Hiscock, 12, with 3 absentees favourable to Miller.

² “Such an outcome,” Platt wrote, “will be regarded a Stalwart victory, and will, I believe, do much toward ending the domination of the Half-breeds.” Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 191.

my wishes," he said, "they will all vote for you at to-night's caucus."³

This was Hiscock's first intimation of the night's conclave. Nor did any suspicion of the coming coup d'état find its way to the caucus. Indeed, while the sixteenth ballot and the twelfth for the evening proceeded without change, Senator Fassett asked Henry G. Burleigh, then a member of Congress and a staunch supporter of Miller, whom he preferred—Morton or Hiscock. "Morton by all means," came the reply. "Then," said Fassett, "rally to his support, for otherwise we propose on the next ballot to nominate Hiscock." Perspiration broke out on Burleigh's face as he replied: "My God, you can't do it!" To a partisan who knew the intense antagonism developed in a two weeks' political contest, it did seem impossible to make such a transfer. But in politics the apparently impossible often happens. It had occurred with Warner Miller's approval in 1881 when Platt became senator. It was now to occur again with Miller as the victim, for at a prearranged signal George Z. Erwin tremblingly drew a paper from his pocket and read a brief, clumsy speech, reciting that Morton, wishing to give another evidence of his desire to benefit his party by an action tending to the union of all its elements, had decided to withdraw in favour of Hiscock, who was supported for like reasons by equally generous Republicans.⁴

Instantly Speaker Husted appealed to the caucus in behalf of Miller, saying among other things that the defeat of Miller would remove a most worthy man from the Senate, and the election of Hiscock take from the House an equally worthy man big with chances for preferment as Speaker. Furthermore, he declared that members would commit a grievous mistake to refuse Senator Miller a re-election after such splendid work for his party. It was plain that half of the Republicans favoured his return and it was unfair

³ New York *Tribune*, January 20, 1887.

⁴ *Ibid.*

to displace him. A party never gains strength when it fails to reward faithful, fearless service.

Without replying, the Morton-Hiscock members coldly demanded a ballot. This resulted in 46 for Miller and 47 for Hiscock. The Morton men had kept faith, and on the next ballot George H. Frost of Chautauqua gave the betrayal kiss. After the pandemonium had exhausted itself and expletives had become commonplace, Husted remarked, good-naturedly: "that an early frost had ruined his vineyard." Later in the roll-call two other changes occurred, the ballot standing, Miller, 43; Hiscock, 50.⁵

The *Nation* said facetiously (January 27): "It is almost certain that some good cause has gained through the failure of the Miller-Husted combination, but what cause it is, Heaven only knows."

At the legislative session of January 20 Hiscock was elected, the Democrats casting their votes for Smith M. Weed of Plattsburg.

⁵ First ballot, Miller 44, Morton 35, Hiscock 12, total 91; second to fourth ballots, Miller 45, Morton 36, Hiscock 11, total 92; fifth to sixteenth ballots, Miller 46, Morton 36, Hiscock 11, total 93; seventeenth ballot, Miller 46, Morton 0, Hiscock 47, total 93; eighteenth ballot, Miller 43, Morton 0, Hiscock 50, total 93. Necessary to a choice, 48 by prearrangement.

CHAPTER XI

PROHIBITIONISTS DEFEAT THE REPUBLICANS

1887

THE year 1887 became known as the spring-tide of political parties. Besides the two regular organisations there were the Progressive Labour party, a sort of resentful, Democratic offshoot of the United Labour party; the Union Labour or George O. Jones party, which had absorbed the Greenback vote in 1885; the United Labour or Henry George party, which took shape in the mayoralty contest of 1886; the Greenback party, and the Prohibition party. As the spring advanced these organisations gave evidence of abundant life, and in the summer each held a State convention.

The United Labour party met in Syracuse early in August, nominated Henry George for secretary of state, and re-affirmed his single-tax and other ideas, including free light and heat, and a postal telegraph and savings bank system. It was a bulky convention. With the aid of Father Edward McGlynn the movement took the form of a crusade to help the poor. "It is a propaganda," said Henry George, "that arouses all the religious enthusiasm of which I am capable." Of George himself Father McGlynn said: "He is a man raised up by the singular providence of God to help those who are suffering and starving and dying. . . . The magnificent truth, the magnificent humanity and justice in the great principles of which he is the exponent and in the platform of which he is the author, made it possible for our committee not only to evangelise and organise labour, but to magnify this convention, which is surely a wonder to the millions of people all over the country who are anxiously watching its deliberations."

Father McGlynn was born in New York, educated in its public schools, prepared for the priesthood in Rome, and in 1866, at the age of twenty-nine, took charge of St. Stephen's Church, located in close proximity to his birth-place. He became known as a leader in humanitarian movements, and as a pastor won the affection of the people by his active sympathies and large-heartedness. He had a stately presence, a face capable of expressing a rapid alteration of mood, and a voice of great strength and sweetness. He was by far the most popular and eloquent priest in New York. Having a burning enthusiasm for the poor, whom he saw shut up in the wretched tenement houses of that day, without sunshine or pure air, it is not strange, perhaps, that he adopted the views of George. But he went further. Affirming that God made the land for the people, he demanded that individual ownership, being contrary to national justice, be surrendered without compensation. This meant confiscation, a proposition so lawless and disloyal that church friends sought to modify his views. Nevertheless, all efforts to restrain his enthusiasm seemed to give greater license to his tongue. Auditoriums became insufficient to hold the crowds. Wherever he appeared the multitudes followed. His admirers likened him to Daniel O'Connell, while the friends of law and order declared his agitation benefited the apostles of disorder more than the deserving poor.

In the midst of this propaganda Archbishop Corrigan directed the Priest to report in Rome within forty days. Various reasons for the order were hinted—McGlynn's belief in the public schools and his failure to establish a parochial school at St. Stephen's; his use of the platform as well as the pulpit; his popularity and eloquence which had excited jealousies; and his independence of Tammany in political matters. Whatever the cause for the Archbishop's order, however, McGlynn refused to go to Rome. As a priest he submitted to the principle of authority, he said, but in exercising the rights of an American citizen he claimed exemption from the dictation of either Bishop or Pope.

His excommunication naturally increased the excitement. To those who resented his punishment the question of doctrine or discipline was a matter of indifference, and whenever or wherever he appeared the audience broke into a storm of impassioned cheering. At the Syracuse convention, the countryside flocked to hear the great agitator. Indeed, Henry George and Edward McGlynn were just then the most conspicuous men in the State, and their convention became the most widely advertised and largely attended gathering of the year.

A month later the convention of the Prohibitionists, meeting in the same city, also attracted unusual attention. A very different type of men from those whom Governor Hill had so skilfully used in 1885 composed it. When asked to indicate their former party one hundred and thirty-four Democrats and eight hundred Republicans responded. Ninety clergymen answered to the roll-call, and a request that all members of the church rise brought the entire nine hundred and seventy-seven delegates to their feet. In character and earnestness the assembly recalled the Abolitionist convention held in Syracuse in 1850, and it proved as great an obstacle to Republican success as the action of the Abolitionists did to the Whigs in 1850. With them there could be no compromise. As one delegate put it: "The Democratic party is hopeless. We have nothing to do with it. Our only course is to defeat the Republican party and thus bring its members to our policy."¹ The convention selected Rev. D. W. C. Huntingdon for secretary of state and added to its platform a woman suffrage plank.

The Republicans met in Saratoga on September 14. As Senator Hiscock and Thomas C. Platt entered the hall the silence which greeted them indicated that insufficient time had elapsed for the delegates to forget the manner of the former's election to the United States Senate. It was remarked that if frost blighted Warner Miller in January, Hiscock and Platt got nipped in September. The enthusi-

¹ *The Nation*, September 15, 1887.

astic reception given Seth Low as temporary chairman manifested the convention's recognition of his six years' work as Mayor of Brooklyn, which had won him a national reputation as a practical reformer and an honest administrator. His high character expressed itself in a fine presence, while a young face, frank and open, with large, kindly eyes that had nothing to conceal, exhibited a brooding care for all the fulness of human life. There was nothing about him peculiar in a political convention, yet he seemed out of the ordinary. This became the more apparent as his words, spoken deliberately, without gesture, in a clear, mellow voice, disclosed the phrase-power and thought-method which had already made him a force in the world of ideas. He was unafraid to follow a difficult argument to its utter conclusions, criticising the tendency of his party to rely too much on "a dead past" and too little on "a living present." Political success did not come by opening old graves or digging new ones. To safeguard and promote the interests of the whole people, and not the demands of a comparatively few individuals, constitute good government which keeps the way open to victory. That Low himself had won on such a platform added tremendously to his advice. Delegates hung on his words as intently as thousands of students did subsequently during the eleven years of his presidency of Columbia University.

"Your speech will cause a ferment of ideas among the delegates," said Senator Evarts. "Men may differ from you, but they will think of what you have said." "That was my purpose," Low replied. "When men begin to think seriously their conversion commences."

The loud applause greeting the announcement that Warner Miller would act as permanent chairman congealed into a stinging silence upon the mention of Senator Hiscock as an escort, leaving no doubt that it was not a Hiscock-Platt convention. They did not speak as they marched slowly in single file, but one reporter humorously observed: "Mr. Miller finally reached the platform in safety." If Miller

nourished any resentment, however, his speech betrayed none. He dug no graves. On the contrary, his earnest declarations of loyalty indicated unmistakable proof of party unity, thus destroying Democratic hopes and widely advertised prophecies of Republican dissensions.

The temperance question provoked the only platform contention. Republicans occupied a difficult position. Although not prepared to incorporate prohibition in their platform, they resented doing nothing while thousands of votes found their way into other channels. The boldness of the liquor industry in influencing elections excited alarm, and in the preceding year a conference of Republicans, held in Chicago, had declared the very existence of the party at stake. In New York the returns showed a loss at both ends and gains nowhere.² Accordingly the Legislature, in January, 1887, passed a local option and high license measure, known as the "Crosby Bill," which Governor Hill vetoed, and the question of its endorsement now divided the platform committee. Finally, Senator Evarts satisfied the majority with the following: "We recommend comprehensive and efficient legislation for giving local option by counties, towns and cities, and restriction by taxation in such localities as do not by their option exclude absolutely the traffic." Its presentation to the convention disclosed much opposition, until Evarts, with a happy touch of humour and quiet sarcasm, explained. "We did not choose," he said, "to commit the convention to the word 'license' to which many sensible people object; nor to the phrase 'high,' which means to many minds higher than it ought to be. We provide that when local option does not extirpate this mischief of the liquor traffic, then shall come restriction by taxation—high taxation, heavy taxation, taxation that will restrain—for remember Chief Justice Marshall holds that the right to tax is the right to destroy." The convention, greeting this erudite defence of the amendment with great laughter, adopted the platform. Nevertheless, several dis-

² *New York Tribune*, July 21, 1886.

gusted Crosbyites accused the Senator of "spitting on the bait" to catch Republican prohibitionists.

The selection of a State ticket provoked no contests.³ A bit of interesting history, however, illuminated the nomination of Frederick Dent Grant, the eldest son of the great General. In the preceding winter Governor Hill nominated young Grant for quarantine commissioner in place of Thomas C. Platt whose term had expired; but the Platt-controlled Senate failed to act upon it. Afterwards, becoming ashamed of his part in the affair, Platt offered to resign if the Governor would renew the appointment. The Governor "deeming it indecorous to make an anti-appointment bargain," declined to do so, adding: "It is surprising you did not make way at the time I nominated him." To atone for Platt's selfishness, it seemed wise that the State convention should honour the young soldier, and accordingly Senator Evarts presented his name in a speech abounding in passages of glowing eulogy for the father and of graceful compliments for the son. The candidate's appearance upon the stage, shy and modest, with a strong facial resemblance to his father, added greatly to the enthusiasm.

If the harmony exhibited by the Republicans had surprised their opponents, the absence of turmoil in the Democratic Convention, which met at Saratoga on August 30, was no less disappointing to the Republicans. For several months a quiet play to control the State organisation had been going on at Albany and Washington. To win McLaughlin, Governor Hill had disapproved bills reorganising the Brooklyn board of aldermen, and substituting a single park commissioner for an unwieldy body. To hold Tammany he had vetoed a uniform system of licensing teachers, which would put an end to favouritism, and ap-

³ The following were the candidates: Secretary of State, Frederick Dent Grant of New York; Treasurer, James H. Carmichael of Erie; Comptroller, Jesse S. Lamoreaux of Saratoga; Attorney-General, James A. Dennison of Fulton; State Engineer and Surveyor, Oliver H. P. Cornell of Tompkins.

proved a land measure that increased the farmer's tax rate. "He has established a reputation," said George William Curtis, "for insincerity, trickiness, and subserviency to corrupt interests."

In the meantime, Whitney and Lamont, representing the President, had played a bolder game. They pacified Croker with an office for his brother, satisfied his lieutenants with similar family favours, gratified McLaughlin with higher wages in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, strengthened the County Democracy by remorselessly excluding Irving Hall from the convention, and in the round-up silenced the most ambitious supporters of the Governor by securing twenty-four of the thirty-four members of the State Committee. Even William F. Sheehan of Buffalo, the astute backer of the Governor, accepted instructions to vote for a Cleveland committeeman. After this show of hands, John O'Brien, the Governor's campaign manager, declared that Hill was not a candidate for President.

To the State Convention, therefore, nothing was left except the adoption of a civil service reform resolution satisfactory to the Mugwumps. This William Dorsheimer, chairman of the Committee, had brought with him. "The Democracy of New York," it read, "reiterates their vindication of the civil service law of the United States and of the State of New York, and their purpose to uphold both; but we insist that the executive rules and regulations to enforce either of those laws shall not restrict or enlarge the intention of the law-making power as set forth in the language employed in those statutes." Although in practice Tammany had richly benefited by a disregard of civil service reform, it stoutly objected to endorsing the theory of such a reform. Thereupon, after some switching and bumping, Dorsheimer, with an indifference and importance that made Bourke Cockran smile at the success of his bluff, substituted the following for the last clause: "In view, however, of the radical change in the administration methods which grow out of the Civil Service laws and the difference of opinion which exists in

relation thereto, we deem this subject one which might properly be submitted to the popular vote." This old dodge, with a plank satisfactory to the liquor interests, proved acceptable to all, and amidst a blaze of oratory the convention finished its labours by selecting the candidates without contest.⁴

The campaign proved a lively one. Although Henry George led the Labour party, Father McGlynn dominated its meetings, swaying the monster assemblies with the magic of an absolute control. On the authority of careful and unsympathetic witnesses the number attending these rallies ran into the tens of thousands. But such heat, under the sane criticism of bold opponents, could not remain at the burning point. "It is only a step from land confiscation to anarchy," said Theodore Roosevelt, "and anarchy is the handmaiden of tyranny, the sure predecessor of the one-man power. The apostles of disorder are the sure allies of despotism, the worst foes of free institutions. No party founded on mere caste can live long in free America, or can work anything but evil while it does live. Such parties are always led by the puzzled-headed people of good intentions, and the base, envious demagogues who live by the froth of their mouths instead of the sweat of their brows. The present ephemeral organisation advances as its cardinal principle a proposition for land confiscation, which, even if its inherent absurdity permitted it to be carried out, would not benefit the labourer in the least. If the workingmen want to fight poverty effectually they can do so not by joining societies with objects as vague as their names are ridiculous, but by paying heed to the excellent advice of Mr. Powderly and making war on the saloons that yearly swallow so incredibly large a proportion of their earnings. The so-called labour-leaders, who attempt to excite sympathy for Anarchists,

⁴ Secretary of State, Frederick Cook, Monroe; Comptroller, Edward Wemple, Fulton; Treasurer, Lawrence J. Fitzgerald, Cortlandt; Attorney-General, Charles E. Tabor, Erie; Engineer and Surveyor, John Bogert, New York.

are acting as foolishly as so many railroad magnates who should try to get Sharp pardoned. It is the interest of all honest men that Sharp goes to prison; it is the interest of every one, not a member of the criminal classes, that the Chicago dynamite throwers be hung.”⁵

Roosevelt was already famous as a speaker, having a bold, happy way of hitting the centre, and of stripping in a few words the camouflage from error, leaving it naked and exposed. He did not enter the campaign, having left early for his cattle-ranch in the West; but an invitation to dine at the Federal Club caught him on the eve of his leave-taking, and this one crisp, stirring speech, published throughout the State, proved a set-back to Father McGlynn. It is certain that McGlynn did not at any time mean to employ force or intend to preach anarchy for the attainment of his ends. Probably he had never seriously considered by what means his “cardinal principle” could be worked out. But it is equally certain that, in his egotistic desire to attract men, he gave little if any heed to the evil influence his impassioned eloquence exerted. Finally, when he realised the utter futility of his crusade and wished to draw back, his followers lost faith, his leadership gradually ceased, and in a few years he was glad to submit to his Bishop, to become reconciled with Rome, and to be restored to his parish.

Nor did the doctrine of Henry George, outside the tenement-house district of New York City, fare any better. One question usually sufficed to puncture his single-tax theory. “If I own a quarter of an acre of land and a house on it which cost \$500,” asked a listener at Whitehall, “and my neighbour across the way owns a similar lot and a house costing \$5,000, would you tax them the same?” “I would,” answered George. “Why should your neighbour be fined for putting up a better house? You have the same chance for using the land he has.” “Your theory, then,” replied his hearer, “operates in the interest of the wealthier citi-

⁵ *New York Tribune*, October 14, 1887.

zen." Then another man asked: "Would you abolish the tax on liquor?" "I would," replied George. These answers quickly stopped the spread of his theories in the rural districts.

A more divisive issue was the liquor question. A growing sentiment among the people, indicated by significant increases in the Prohibition vote, had incited a Republican legislature to pass a drastic measure, giving each county, town and city the right either to prohibit or to tax the sale of liquor, and, although Governor Hill vetoed it, the Republicans at their State Convention, as already stated, had unequivocally endorsed the principle. This put the liquor interests squarely on the defensive, and their appearance as an organised political force, aided by large sums of money, proved the most significant development of the year. Formerly they had shown a disposition to keep their operations in the dark, using as allies members of both political parties and declaring allegiance to none; but the bold action of the Republicans forced them into the open, and throughout the campaign their spectacular parades in the larger cities and free use of money everywhere indicated a new force in politics and an additional ally for the Democrats.

This condition brought from Roosevelt, in the speech already quoted in part, another characteristic shot: "The Democrats, in their platform, and through the vetoes of their Governor, as well as the votes of their legislators, have committed themselves squarely against any system that will relieve us from the existing abuses of the liquor traffic. They frankly join issue with us on this point. They deny that drinking is an evil, or has bad effects. They are openly the supporters of the saloon, opposed to doing away with it, or to taking steps to minimise the harm it does. Yet with incredible folly the very men who profess to be most opposed to the saloon, join the rumsellers in acting as its most efficient ally. The Prohibition party, forming, be it always remembered, a very insignificant portion of the whole number of prohibitionists, is the best friend the liquor-dealers

have in the State, and they both work hand in hand to thwart the only party that has either the will, or the brain, to grapple with the question. The Republican policy is not alone the best but the only one that offers any immediate relief from present evils."

A waspish attack by the Democrats upon Frederick Dent Grant, the Republican candidate for secretary of state, formed a unique feature of the campaign. He had given no cause for criticism unless it were that his wife, a lady of beauty, high intelligence, strong character, and womanly qualities, had, by accompanying him, given his campaign an éclat that brought out the women and occasionally made necessary overflow meetings. Nor did he himself lack merit. In singling him out in the preceding winter as a proper person for quarantine commissioner, Governor Hill declared him "honest and competent," possessing "the confidence of the people without distinction of party." Nevertheless, the opposition declared his nomination due solely to his being the son of General Grant, which was denounced as un-American—an effort to introduce the English practice of raising sons of famous fathers to the order of Peers. One speaker cited the will of Sir Robert Peel, in which that eminent statesman expressed a wish that no member of his family should accept any reward except what came from personal achievement.

Of course Sir Robert, it was said in reply, did not object to his son standing for the House of Commons, or for any office which he must gain and continue to hold by his own wits, and nothing more was sought for or by young Grant. Then came the question: "If Grant is denied the privilege of running for office because he is the son of a famous father, by what agency can such a handicap be removed if not by the regularly elected delegates to a nominating convention?" And Senator Evarts asked: "Was the father any greater than his son at the son's age?" Thus the inherent absurdity of the criticism silenced it.

The result of the campaign, however, remained in doubt

until the end. Governor Hill's election in 1885, due largely to the increased prohibition vote, encouraged the Democrats to repeat their tactics, while the hope of Republicans depended upon their anti-saloon policy, approved by the progressive reform sentiment of the party. Seth Low had advocated it, Senator Evarts had prepared the plank, Warner Miller had commended it, and Roosevelt had declared it "not only the best policy, but the only one that offers any immediate relief from present evils." Moreover, the campaign had been conducted by Cornelius N. Bliss, chairman of a State Committee composed largely of active young men in full sympathy with the proposed reform. It seemed unthinkable, therefore, that the Prohibitionists could add more than five thousand votes to their unprecedented aggregate in 1885. But the returns showed an increase of eleven thousand, electing the Democratic ticket by pluralities differing only slightly from those of 1885.⁶

As great a surprise came in the vote for Grant, who ran from 2,500 to 4,500 behind his colleagues. A report went about that this loss implied disparagement of Thomas C. Platt, who had negotiated the nomination to relieve himself from the embarrassment of having selfishly prevented Grant's confirmation as quarantine commissioner. It especially comforted the Democrats that Henry George's vote showed only a slight increase over that given him in 1886 in New York City, while the Republicans rejoiced that the Legislature, to which Governor Hill had given personal attention, indicated no Republican shrinkage.

⁶ The following are the pluralities: Cook, Secretary of State, 17,077; Wemple, Comptroller, 15,374; Fitzgerald, Treasurer, 11,026; Tabor, Attorney-General, 14,361; Bogart, Engineer, 13,061; Legislature—Senate, Republicans 21, Democrats 11; Assembly, Republicans 72, Democrats 56. Total vote: United Labour, 70,055; Prohibition, 41,850; Progressive Labour, 7,622; Union Labour, 1,011; Greenback, 953.

CHAPTER XII

CLEVELAND VERSUS HILL

1888

WHILE New York Republicans were nursing their regret over the obstinacy of the Prohibitionists, President Cleveland surprised the country in December, 1887, with a message to Congress declaring that "our present tariff laws, the vicious, inequitable and illogical sources of unnecessary taxation, ought to be at once revised and amended, not only because rates of duty laid in times of war to meet extraordinary expenses are steadily piling up a redundant revenue in the Treasury, but because many of the articles, notably wool and woollen goods, which carry the burden of the tax, are necessary to people of every rank and economic condition. Our progress towards a wise conclusion," continued the message, "will not be improved by dwelling upon theories of protection and free-trade. . . . It is a condition which confronts us—not a theory. . . . The question of free-trade is absolutely irrelevant." This message, strong and imperative in every sentence, was accepted as the voice of courage and decision, but it filled the leaders of his party with dismay, and its rank and file with confusion. Thus it became the initiative of a second party upheaval.

The first had occurred at the beginning of the Administration. President Cleveland thought it compatible with the civil service laws to refuse reappointment to Republican officials whose statutory term of four years had expired, and to ask the resignation of Republican officials whose duties brought them into relations of confidence with the Administration, or whose "offensive partisanship" betrayed them into hostility to it; but he declined to dismiss officials other-

wise eligible, especially clerks within the limits of the recently enacted civil service statute. In making appointments at Albany he had recognised that long experience merited promotion, and in giving heed to party demands he had exacted capacity and fitness in the applicant. At Washington, however, the civil service offered to place-hunters well-paying post-offices and other political jobs of importance, which were not within the statute, but which, under the rules laid down, were not then accessible. This policy greatly disturbed politicians who expected a "clean sweep" of Republican office-holders, and in their disappointment they did not disguise their dislike, charging that the President showed no talent for leadership and dictated rather than developed a policy. They thought him ungracious, inconsistent, stubborn, slow to act, busy with small things, and a destroyer of his party.

Meanwhile, Governor Hill rapidly grew in favour. A majority of the local leaders turned to him in their need. Such an opportunity gave wings to his ambition, and while the President continued Republicans in office and turned away deserving Democrats, the Governor made flattering promises and preached the unctuous doctrine that the prompt distribution of the spoils of victory conserved the virility of a party. In an address before the Bay State Club of Boston (June 19, 1886) he declared himself utterly opposed to any policy or scheme which prevents an Administration from recognising faithful party service in the distribution of important offices of the Government. To show their loyalty to the Governor, if not their dislike of the President, local leaders from all parts of the State, not yet solaced with a Federal office, made Hill's headquarters at Albany resemble a Catiline camp. The attitude of many newspapers encouraged the disaffection. Indeed, Hill and his friends had little more to do than to look on and smile complacently. Contrasted with the President's apparently unhappy plight, the Governor seemed destined to a career of uninterrupted success.

Nevertheless, Daniel E. Manning watched the Governor's performances. Although Manning's sound and comprehensive views of finance soon won him a place among the most eminent Secretaries of the Treasury, his training under Samuel J. Tilden, who, always allowing for the weakness of human nature, did not require excessive virtue, made him an expert in attending to party duties. He thought it wholesome to change a civil service which had been exclusively Republican for a generation, and through the appointment division of the Secretary's office "indolence," "incompetence" and "offensive partisanship" opened a wide door for "benefiting" the public service and incidentally gratifying an army of hungry applicants. Under this liberal interpretation of the President's rules the Democratic party in New York as elsewhere became picketed with clever politicians whose partisan instincts corresponded with his own.¹ Gradually it dawned upon the disaffected local leaders that the "clean sweep," if it had not come with a rush, was on its way. Thus it was that the Administration leaders, as told in a previous chapter, appeared in force at the Democratic State Convention in 1887, and not only took control

¹ During the first ten months of the Cleveland administration, 769 officials were suspended, including 330 serving under four-year terms (Cleveland, *Presidential Problems*, 42-47), while fourth-class postmasters were removed by the thousands (*The Forum*, October, 1892, p. 203). So rapid were these changes that the entire force would be replaced with new men in two years instead of four (*The New York Nation*, August 13, 1885). In the railway mail service, requiring experience and expert training, three-fourths of the employes were removed (Dewey's *National Problems*, p. 33). "Officially every man is offensive who is not in sympathy with the party in power. That is the meaning of the Democratic idea of representative republican government based upon party responsibility" (Henry Watterson in *Public Opinion*, p. 142, Dec. 4, 1886). In 1885 the number of Federal employes was about 120,000, two-thirds of whom were changed during the first half of the Administration. Of the chief officers numbering 58,000, over 45,000 were changed. All of the 85 collectors of internal revenue and 100 of the 111 collectors of customs were displaced (Curtis, *Orations and Addresses*, Vol. 2, p. 343).

of the State Committee but threatened Hill's renomination in 1888. The Governor quickly recognised that practical politics could be mixed with reform theories, and with some show of modesty, based upon a fear of the future, he dropped into line behind the President, declaring him the stronger candidate.²

Then came like a bolt from the blue the President's message of 1887. Apropos of Lincoln's abolition proclamation he had asked the advice of no one. On hearing it read, Whitney and other members of the Cabinet besought him not to issue it, claiming its presentation untimely, and that it would endanger his re-election. But the President thought the time had come to state what he held to be the real and important question, and he refused to modify it. To the Democratic press generally, especially to the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Nashville American*, the *Mobile Register*, and the *Birmingham Age*, it seemed to force the party onto a free-trade platform which to them meant a square attack upon the deeply rooted protected interests of the country,—an issue for which the party was not ready.

With this message for an excuse, the anti-Administration Democrats of New York renewed their opposition to the President. Governor Hill welcomed the movement, and to get again into the national limelight as well as to strengthen his grip upon the rank and file of the party, he vetoed the high license and ballot-reform bills which had recently come from a Republican Legislature. While he probably recognised that a false public conscience had grown up with regard to bribery at the polls, he did not act as if it were improper. Few men then active in political management held it really in hatred. Men in high office, who would spurn a direct money bribe, thought the corruption of voters quite a legitimate thing. Nevertheless, his vetoes, so pleasing to liquor dealers and political heelers, shocked the State. It was a blow to decency. Criticism by the press and the

² *National Problems*, Dewey, p. 135.

clergy swept the State like a whirlwind. Able Democratic lawyers expressed their disappointment and sharply questioned the sufficiency of his reasons,³ while George William Curtis predicted that if the Democratic party substituted Hill for Cleveland "it would be laughed out of power for another twenty-five years."⁴

However, the two vetoes worked like a charm. If he was reviled, he was also praised. Friends worked and fought for him, several journals going so far in their devotion as to attack the President. "Cleveland was nominated, forced into nomination, indeed," said the *Albany Times* (March 10) "for no reason save his presumed availability. He then had the prestige of 192,000 majority. How can the prestige of 1,047 plurality answer as a rallying cry for his nomination at St. Louis?" Further to strengthen himself with local leaders, the Governor let anxiety ripen into loyalty before acting upon a mass of their bills passed in the closing hours of the Legislature. Many of them interested politicians, others of far-reaching importance concerned men's business affairs, and others still touched McLaughlin of Brooklyn. Those he approved bore fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty. Indeed, so quickly did the Governor rise Neptune-like above the waves which seemed to have overwhelmed him, that in a contest to fill a vacancy in the National Democratic Committee, the State Committee, which had stood 24 to 10 in favour of Cleveland in the preceding October, now showed a tie-vote. To the Administration it was a tremendous surprise. It magnified the loss of Manning, who, upon his death in the preceding January, had been succeeded as chairman of the Democratic State Committee by D. Cady Herrick of Albany. Besides a learned and successful lawyer, Herrick had been a life-long politician, prominent in State conventions, and the lieutenant of Manning, "whose machine," said the *World*, "was

³ New York *Evening Post*, May 14, 1888.

⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, February 11, 1888.

to Albany what Tammany was to New York." But for management he did not belong in Hill's class.

Great significance attached to the "tie-vote." It disclosed an acute division in the party, which meant that influences and intrigue were at work to foster discord at the State Convention, called to meet at New York City on May 15 to select delegates-at-large to the National Democratic Convention. It was Hill's ambition to head this delegation. Something might happen. Twenty years before Horatio Seymour, although not a candidate for President, had won a nomination when the convention, tired and worn out by quarrels and heat, saw no other way of breaking a deadlock. In any event the mere thought of being present to receive the homage due to the famous Governor of the Empire State, and a much talked of candidate for President, exhilarated him. It would create the impression that while the New York Democracy favoured Cleveland, it was none the less a Hill party, which gave its allegiance to the President through the graceful acquiescence of David Bennett Hill. He scouted the idea of any ill-feeling toward the President, and bore reproaches with dignity and composure; but no one heard him reprove the Albany *Times*, or deny his determination to go to St. Louis.

The situation troubled the Administration leaders. They believed Cleveland would be renominated. Ignoring some disappointments and failures, the party at large recognised him as its only available candidate, whose administration had inspired very general public confidence as a conservative, efficient, and economical one. Even the charge that he accounted himself an Independent rather than a Democrat had been silenced by the record, showing that the "clean sweep," if it did not come at the outset, had arrived later. Indeed, the sweep had been so clean that "we cannot even admit," said George William Curtis, president of the Civil Service Reform Association, "that the reform law, within its limits, had been really enforced. Yet his Administration, despite all disappointments, has gained respect and confi-

dence, and is identified in the public mind with the cause of reform.”⁵ Having refused to lead a second labour movement, Henry George very early announced his purpose to support Cleveland. Nevertheless, it could not be safely assumed that the President was altogether or even generally acceptable to his party. There were honest doubts, and pretensions probably not so honest, as to the actual sentiment.

Under these conditions it seemed unwise to permit the Governor to head the New York delegation to St. Louis, with his propagandising friends in the headquarters of every State delegation pronouncing him the only candidate who could certainly carry the one State upon which the election of a Democrat depended. Nor was it the purpose of Secretary Whitney or Private Secretary Lamont to allow the Governor either to go to the National Convention, or in any wise to link his name with that of Cleveland, and in their perplexity they anticipated every means to facilitate his defeat. It worked to their advantage that serious disclosures, brought out by the Fassett Legislative Committee, just then attracted wide attention to the Governor's insensibility to the proprieties. His expenditure of the State's money for a billiard table for his own use had left a blemish, especially when contrasted with the conduct of Governor Cornell, who originally purchased such a table with his own funds and afterwards sold it to Governor Cleveland; but the revelations of the Fassett Committee, connecting him with Rollin M. Squire, New York City's notorious and recently retired commissioner of public works, did more to disturb the better class of his supporters. The evidence which showed the Governor's reluctance to approve Squire's removal, and his implied threat to dismiss the District Attorney if he prosecuted the Commissioner, laid bare an intrigue which asso-

⁵ *Harper's Weekly*, April 21, 1888. The official records showed that early in the spring of 1888 less than 100 Federal offices in New York State out of 2,180 were held by Republicans, and most of these were unimportant fourth-class post-offices.

ciated his name with the corrupt "acqueduct deal." It recalled his earlier profitable dealings with Tweed and the outlawed canal claims.

The daily publication of these disclosures facilitated the work of the Administration managers. Nothing had escaped their attention. The personnel of the convention, the support of Tammany, the good-will of McLaughlin, and the preparation of a platform that could give no offence, had received special care. Indeed, so thorough were their arrangements that when the convention assembled its harmony made it dull. It praised the President, ignored the Mills Bill, declared civil service purified, elevated and improved, and in a separate resolution commended the Governor's administration. Then it excluded him as a delegate-at-large to the National Convention.⁶ The whole affair had a peculiarly insincere ring. "A jumble of evasions and compromises," the *World* called it.⁷ Nevertheless, the apparent repudiation of Hill gratified many people. "Three months ago," said the *New York Times*, "even the President's most zealous supporters would hardly have predicted with confidence that the work of the State Democratic Convention would be performed with such complete harmony. The Governor has not infrequently met with serious rebuffs in the game of politics, but yesterday for the first time he encountered absolute defeat and repudiation by his party. He had schemed and intrigued for a place at the head of the delegation-at-large. His friends strove to convince the Administration that he was too strong in the State to be cavalierly treated. But the Convention would have none of him."⁸

This prepared the way for similar harmony at the Demo-

⁶ The following delegates-at-large were chosen: George Raines of Rochester, representing the up-state; Roswell P. Flower, who stood for Tammany; Edward Cooper for the County Democracy; and Alfred O. Chapin for Kings County.

⁷ *New York World*, September 10.

⁸ May 16, 1888.

cratic National Convention, which met at St. Louis on June 4. It soon appeared that the President was stronger with the people than with the politicians, while these impatient critics who had persistently nagged him for his infidelity to Democratic principles, now spoke of his "unfailing integrity and robust common-sense." Banking interests favoured him; business men liked his civic courage and moderation; and the commercial class generally approved him because business had not been affected by the change to a Democratic administration. In fact, by the time the National Convention met no other name was mentioned. So the delegates renominated the President by acclamation, although many smiled derisively and indulged in sinister comments when his name excited far less applause than the mention of Horatio Seymour and Samuel J. Tilden. Plainly a party which hitherto had chafed and almost choked with wrath at his policies was not fully in sympathy with him as its nominee. Yet neither of the veteran leaders so vociferously applauded ever possessed the power over a convention then disclosed by Grover Cleveland. Probably patronage had much to do with it, but whatever the cause every detail conformed to his wishes. Although the Committee on Resolutions divided almost equally on the wisdom of endorsing the December message and the pending Mills Bill, a whisper from the President's factotum sufficed to include them all. The arrangement that George Raines present the President's name met a summary order to substitute Daniel Dougherty, a recent Tammany importation from Philadelphia. "The noise of the redoubtable Dougherty was tremendous," said the *Evening Post*, "but the sense of it scanty and nebulous. Dougherty now carries the Tammany trombone."⁹ Finally, when Cleveland disclosed his wish that Allen G. Thurman, the venerable veteran of Ohio, should be nominated Vice-President, Edward Cooper, the champion of former Governor Isaac Gray of Indiana, remarked diplomatically that the President's manœuvres were

⁹ New York *Evening Post*, June 7.

not conducted with much reference to those with whom he should have co-operated.¹⁰

After the renomination of the President, the question of renominating Governor Hill absorbed attention. There was vigorous opposition. A strong sentiment existed, independently of the President's known dislike, that Hill's connection with the Aqueduct scandal would seriously weaken him as a candidate. The County Democracy, at a meeting called for the purpose, formally declared him "unworthy of a nomination." Even the New York *Sun*, Hill's conspicuous ally and Cleveland's most irritating critic, sought diplomatically to open the way for another candidate. "A great number of respectable gentlemen of the Democratic faith," it said, "are looking to William C. Whitney as the man for whom they expect to vote for governor, provided Governor Hill should decide to retire."¹¹ This hint revealed the wide extent and high character of the antagonism. Yet the friends of Cleveland faced a serious problem. "Can Herrick," asked the Troy *Times*, "take to the State Convention twelve delegates from Albany County, who will become his instruments to put Hill aside and thus endanger the National Democratic ticket?"¹² This was the voice of Edward Murphy Jr., recently elected chairman of the Democratic State Committee over Herrick, and it sounded a note of alarm. Moreover, it came from one who had deemed it expedient to keep Hill in the background until after the nomination of the President, even though it temporarily humiliated the Governor and enraged his personal friends.

Meantime Richard Croker, McLaughlin of Brooklyn, and their associate up-state leaders, sought to control the State convention, called to meet in Buffalo on September 13. They indulged in no threats and the President's friends incited no opposition. To the latter it now seemed plain that although Hill might strive to make his vote in November

¹⁰ The vote for Vice-president stood; Thurman, 690; Gray, 105.

¹¹ August 28, 1888.

¹² September 2.

larger than Cleveland's, his nomination presented less danger than his defeat. And so the convention became, what it was afterwards called, "a convention by acclamation." George Raines acted as temporary chairman, Herrick became permanent president, Thomas F. Gilroy presented a platform carefully prepared by the Governor, and the delegates wildly roared their approval as Raines declared that "Democracy gives her commission of leadership in New York to her truest and strongest son, her most feared champion, the present Governor of the State—David Bennett Hill."¹³

To many delegates it was not a happy occasion. Its platform was evasive, and bold as the man who wrote it. It preached the preservation of the purity of elections, and failed to specify, though Herrick asked the Committee to do so, why the vetoed Saxton-Electoral Bill would not have preserved it; it favoured the most rigid restriction of the liquor traffic, but opposed "all sumptuary laws needlessly interfering with the personal liberties of any part of our citizens"; and it unblushingly declared that the revelations of the Aqueduct investigation, showing that Hill permitted his note for campaign expenses to be met out of a questionable contract paid by City taxpayers, "have only served to strengthen him in the public confidence."

In the following month Richard Croker dictated the nomination of Hugh J. Grant for mayor. John Kelly had selected Grant for the same office in 1884 and the County Democracy elected William R. Grace. The next fall Grant became sheriff of New York County, Croker taking a lion's share of his fat fees. It was now Croker's hope, if not his salvation, to elect him mayor, since Kelly's reckless fights with Tilden, Robinson, Manning and Whitney, had left Tammany with little patronage. Moreover the office of mayor, under the reform legislation of Theodore Roosevelt, now ranked scarcely second to the governorship.

¹³ Nominations were made as follows: Governor, David B. Hill; Lieutenant-Governor, Edward F. Jones; Court of Appeals, John Clinton Gray of New York.

Opposed to Grant the County Democracy nominated Abram S. Hewitt. Although, perhaps, unequalled as an honest, capable mayor, Hewitt's obstinacy and garrulity made him a poor candidate for renomination. To the Irish he was anathema, for in the preceding spring he refused to review the St. Patrick's Day parade or to allow the Irish flag to float over the City Hall. It weakened him, also, that the County Democracy had become less respectable than Tammany. Its leaders dressed in style and filled all the offices under Hewitt, but their suspicious affluence and disregard of public opinion deprived the organisation of its former prestige. On the other hand, Croker had disclosed a leadership of State-wide acknowledgment. His influence in the two recent conventions evinced tact as well as a thorough understanding of the delicate situation growing out of the conflicting candidacy of Cleveland and Hill, and much of the credit of achieving their nomination without strife or a party division was generously accorded him. Albeit, the County Democracy's possession of nearly all the city offices gave Hewitt a great advantage, at least until the Platt organisation, as in 1886, divided the anti-Tammany forces by nominating Joel B. Erhart.

CHAPTER XIII

HARRISON AND WARNER MILLER

1888

THE Republicans welcomed President Cleveland's December message as a challenge. They sought to make the tariff a leading issue in 1884, but bitter personalities dominated the campaign. Now that the President had opened the way for its presentation their confidence of success brought out many "favourite sons" as candidates for President. With the exception of Chester A. Arthur and John A. Logan, both of whom had died, the prominent candidates of 1884 were still in public life. John Sherman of Ohio immediately assumed great prominence. Benjamin Harrison of Indiana, whose leadership in a doubtful State had long classed him among Presidential possibilities, aroused special interest. Senator Allison of Iowa, a modest man of great industry, of long legislative experience, and most happy in his relations with colleagues, enjoyed favourable mention. The Civil War record of Russell A. Alger of Michigan, coupled with his willingness to spend money, brought him into notice; while a movement for Walter Q. Gresham of Indiana, which Sherman declared "started by accident and largely from the unnatural combination of the Chicago *Tribune* and *Inter-Ocean*,"¹ attracted wide attention. In the list Chauncey M. Depew figured as the favourite of New York, although Sherman retained the favour of its financial interests.

It very soon appeared, however, that the activity of James G. Blaine's friends far exceeded that of other candidates. Their plan seemed to consider all the essentials necessary to nominate and all the devices needed to conceal their

¹ *John Sherman's Letters*, May 21, 1888, Cong. Library.

purposes. Apparently to avoid suspicion of complicity in the propaganda, the Maine statesman, in a letter dated at Florence, Italy, December 25, 1887, and addressed to the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, said: "I wish through you to state to the members of the Republican party that my name will not be presented to the National Convention called to assemble in Chicago in June next." This letter fitted nicely into the scheme of his friends, since he spoke positively of what he could not prevent and remained silent upon the point that, if nominated, he would not accept. In other words, the letter left him "in the hands of his friends."

Meantime evidence accumulated that his friends so interpreted it. Straw votes, based upon the assumption that he had withdrawn, exploited his strength, while district conventions and several State conventions on the Pacific Coast instructed for him. His loyal adherents in "doggerel iteration" declared him the only logical candidate—

"Blaine, Blaine, the man from Maine,
We've had him once, and we'll have him again."

In explaining his loss of delegates in Tennessee and North Carolina, Senator Sherman wrote (May 23): "A month ago both those States were undoubtedly for me, and yet, since that time, agents with plenty of money have conducted a canvass in secret in favour of Blaine. From the present outlook he is as much a candidate as he was four years ago."² Sherman also disclosed other devices in Blaine's interest. "For the last two or three weeks," he wrote (May 21), "all telegrams of the Associated Press are in the interest of Mr. Blaine in pursuance of an active and vigorous contest for his nomination by leading friends."³ A carefully prepared statement, issued by Patrick Ford, saying in substance that only Blaine could get the Irish vote, accentuated Sherman's belief.

² Letters (unpublished), Cong. Library.

³ *Ibid.*

In New York the situation soon became favourable to Blaine. Sherman, relying upon Warner Miller's aid, complained "of fair promises but no votes."⁴ Depew said: "I do not expect to get the nomination, but I firmly believe Blaine will."⁵ Platt also bowed to the Plumed Knight. He had broken the ice in 1884, but found his reception so cold that he returned to his old friends for companionship. Since then his leadership had made little progress. The election of Governor Hill obstructed his way; the choice of Evarts for senator proved a set-back; and although Hiscock's luck had clipped Miller's wings, resentment over the latter's defeat impaired his prestige. To drop on the winning side, therefore, was the only thing left him to do, and while expressing the belief that sixty of New York's seventy-two delegates would be for Blaine, he flirted with Russell A. Alger, spoke kindly of Walter Q. Gresham, studied the depth of the sentiment for Benjamin Harrison, exhibited little liking for John Sherman, and under cover of Depew's candidacy awaited developments in the West, where leading Republican journals, which sneered in 1884 at the notion of playing to win the Independent vote, now urged the importance of such a policy.

This unexpected change of sentiment, plainly reflecting distrust of Blaine's winning power, tended to check any expression by the New York Republican State Convention, which met at Buffalo on May 17 to select four delegates-at-large. The shouting for Depew and a liberal display of his pictures gave the convention a lively, businesslike appearance; but it had the character of a muffled drum. Nothing was allowed to break out. Delegates were uninstructed, preferences carefully concealed, and principles referred to a later convention. A forced harmony also existed. As George B. Sloan predicted in the senatorial contest of 1887, Platt and Hiscock had locked arms. This became the more apparent when James M. Husted, John B. Dutcher, and

⁴ Letters (unpublished), Cong. Library.

⁵ *Harper's Weekly*, May 12, 1888.

other anti-Platt delegates, spoiling for a fight, proposed to substitute Levi P. Morton for Frank Hiscock as a delegate-at-large. The revolt took decided shape when the New York City delegation supported it by a vote of 110 to 11, and for a time it looked as if the Senator might suffer a galling slight.⁶ But Platt cleverly checkmated the intrigue by having Warner Miller disapprove the sedition and Morton refuse the use of his name.

After this Platt sat tighter in the saddle. He controlled Hiscock, he held Morton in hand to subserve his purposes, and he had hobbled Miller. Prior to this Platt's position was a bit hazy. Indeed, so uncertain was his own election as a delegate-at-large, that, immediately upon Miller's arrival in Buffalo, Platt sought him out and ostensibly buried the hatchet under an agreement that Miller might run for Governor and that both should go to Chicago as delegates-at-large. This made Miller, under the presumed necessity for harmony, an obedient tool to save Hiscock.⁷

It is not surprising, perhaps, that a convention, so guarded and hypocritically harmonious, should adopt, without remarks or apparent sympathy, a resolution of respect for Roscoe Conkling, the determined, outspoken, resolute Stalwart, who had died on the eighteenth of the preceding month in his fifty-ninth year. Since his retirement from public life in 1881, the Senator had taken no part in politics, and evaded every attempt to draw from him a position or definite expression upon political affairs. Yet so faithful was the personal devotion which he inspired, that several clubs, preparatory to taking part in the pending Presidential campaign, had already adopted his name and proposed him as a Presidential candidate.

As the day of the Chicago Convention approached the camouflage candidacy of Blaine became more pronounced,

⁶ *New York Times*, May 17, 1888.

⁷ The following were elected delegates-at-large: Frank Hiscock, Warner Miller, Chauncey M. Depew and Thomas C. Platt. This was known as "the Union ticket."

although several Republican papers, which had accepted his Florence letter as a sincere withdrawal, continued to question his availability. "The strong, growing conviction is that his nomination will be the suicide of our party," is the way Sherman put it.⁸ "It is another illustration of this curious change," said the *Evening Post*, "that whereas four years ago the West expressed its contempt for independence in politics, now Western Republicans admit that the Independent vote holds the balance of power, and insists upon a policy which will commend it to their party."⁹ That the sincere friends of Blaine kept him advised of this change was manifest by a second letter, dated May 7: "Assuming," he wrote, "that the Presidential nomination could by any possible chance be offered to me, I could not accept it without leaving in the minds of thousands of these men the impression that I had not been free from indirection, and, therefore, could not accept it at all." Nevertheless, the *Tribune*, on the day before the balloting began at Chicago, said: "When all of the objections have been considered and the strength of each candidate estimated so far as it can be, what if it be found that, in the opinion of a majority of the convention, sound judgment does not warrant the selection of either? An answer in that event, and in that event only, is the nomination towards which the great majority of the party inclined before Mr. Blaine's wishes were made known."¹⁰ "Thus," said the *Evening Post*, "is the Blaine conspiracy confessed."¹¹

Although Depew's presidency of the New York Central Railroad rendered him unacceptable to the Granger States, the New York delegation, on reaching the National Convention (June 19), agreed unanimously to present his name as its candidate for President. Still, Platt talked of Blaine, Hiscock kept profoundly silent, and Miller assumed an atti-

⁸ Letters, May 23, Cong. Library.

⁹ New York *Evening Post*, May 16, 1888.

¹⁰ New York *Tribune*, June 21, 1888.

¹¹ New York *Evening Post*, June 22.

tude of watchful waiting, though he received credit for the twenty-two New York votes given the Mahone (Virginia) delegates in the interest of Sherman. However, he declined Sherman's suggestion to place him in nomination.¹² The support of Depew by the New York delegation was not less insincere. No one took his candidacy seriously. The chairman of the Minnesota delegation declared that the circulation of a picture of a four-track railroad, bearing the words, "The public be damned," would of itself defeat him in the Northwest.

Yet the great necessity for carrying New York made the belief general that its delegation, if solid for a candidate other than Depew, could control the nomination. Relying upon this sentiment, Francis Hendricks of Syracuse suggested consolidating upon Hiscock. It seems to have come without special backing or consideration, but its justification, if it had any, depended upon the Senator ingratiating himself by his eloquence and good judgment when presenting Depew. His speech, however, had a contrary effect, since his suggestion that success in New York would more than offset the loss of the Northwest, greatly angered the delegates of that section, who needed a popular Presidential candidate to help elect their State officials.

After Depew's withdrawal at the close of the third ballot, New York's dilemma still confronted it. Although only Gresham and Alger showed much headway, the virility of all the candidates offered no encouragement to the Blaine scheme. To test Harrison's strength, therefore, fifty-nine New Yorkers, led by the four delegates-at-large, voted for the Indianian. This awakened a slumbering sentiment that quickly put him in the class with Sherman. But the next ballot, giving him slight additional advantage, accentuated the theory that the Blaine leaders planned to hobble all candidates until weariness forced their retirement in favour of their statesman. It strengthened this supposition that Sherman and Gresham had fallen below their initial record;

¹² Sherman, *Letters of*, May 26, Cong. Library.

that Alger relied upon fickle votes in the South; and that Harrison had not proven a tempting bait. Moreover, Depew, Husted, and other original New York Blaine leaders declared his nomination the logic of the situation, while a majority of Ohio's delegates, whose half-hearted support of Sherman had proved a serious obstacle to the latter's preferment, announced their readiness to back him. Thus the hour to strike seemed to have come. But upon the insistence of Blaine's immediate friends, made more cautious by recent telegrams, a stampede was left to a committee, who intently watched the sixth ballot. Although New York for the first time cast its seventy-two votes for Harrison, neither his total nor that of any other candidate showed material change. Nevertheless, the tension warned the Blaine committee of a threatened Sherman combination which might easily control the situation, and on the seventh ballot, after the reading of Blaine's latest cablegram, California changed its vote from Blaine to Harrison. This, with other changes, put the Indianian far in the lead. Immediately Iowa announced the withdrawal of Allison, the transfer of whose votes to Harrison on the eighth ballot resulted in the latter's nomination before the roll-call had reached Tennessee.¹³

In writing of the result (June 26), Senator Sherman said: "It seemed necessary for me to make the contest if for no other reason than to unmask the hypocrisy of Blaine.

18	Ballots							
Candidates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sherman	229	249	244	235	224	244	231	118
Gresham	109	108	123	98	87	91	91	59
Alger	84	116	122	135	142	137	120	100
Depew	99	99	91					
Harrison	84	91	95	217	223	231	278	544
Allison	72	75	87	88	99	73	76	
Blaine	35	33	35	42	48	40	40	5

Necessary to a choice, 416.

		<i>New York's Vote</i>						
Depew	72	72	72					
Harrison				59	58	72	72	72

I would have been nominated at any time with a reasonable support from New York, but Platt and Hiscock held a large portion of the delegation in their grip, and Depew and Miller were so feeble and unskilful as to allow them to control.”¹⁴ In his autobiography, published several years later, he said: “I believed then, as I believe now, that a corrupt bargain was made on Sunday which transferred the great body of the vote of New York to General Harrison and thus led to his nomination. It is to the credit of General Harrison to say that if the reputed bargain was made it was without his consent at the time, nor did he carry it into execution.”¹⁵

Pending the recess between Saturday and Monday, a confidential cablegram from Andrew Carnegie, the host of Blaine in Scotland, put an end to further dickering: “Too late,” it said; “Blaine immovable. Take Harrison and Phelps.”¹⁶ The New Yorkers, however, showed no disposition to take William Walter Phelps of New Jersey, the defender of Blaine in 1884, and without hesitation Warner Miller presented the name of Levi P. Morton, whose nomination as Vice President followed on the first ballot.¹⁷

In its platform the convention recommended a repeal of the taxes upon tobacco and the tax upon spirits used in the arts and for mechanical purposes, and such revision of the tariff as would tend to check imports of articles which are produced by the American people. Should a larger revenue than was requisite still remain, it favoured the entire repeal of the internal revenue taxes. It also expressed a cordial sympathy “with all wise and well directed efforts for the promotion of temperance and morality.”

On August 29, when the Republican State Convention met at Saratoga, nothing stood in the way of harmony. Indeed,

¹⁴ Letters (unpublished), June 23, 1888, Cong. Library.

¹⁵ Vol. 2, p. 1029.

¹⁶ Stanwood, *Life of Blaine*, p. 308.

¹⁷ The vote stood: Levi P. Morton, N. Y., 591; William Walter Phelps, N. J., 119; William O. Bradley, Ky., 103.

confidence of success seemed to focus all the rays of gathering hope and kindle them into a flame of wild enthusiasm, which reached its height when George B. Sloan, in a speech peculiarly appreciative, presented the name of Warner Miller for Governor. The convention sprang to its feet and cheered long and loudly. In seconding the nomination State Senator Fassett, fresh from investigating the Aqueduct scandal, kept up the applause by a skilful eulogy which summed up the sins of Governor Hill. "Warner Miller," he said, "will not place himself in improper relations with contractors of the State; he will not permit his campaign expenses to be met out of contracts paid by the taxpayers; he will not surround himself with men that create scandal; he will not veto bills drawn to secure the purity of the ballot and the betterment of the home. He will be controlled by the power of righteousness." It was a hearty, generous speech, "and is accepted," said the *Times*, "as a guarantee that Platt will not practise phlebotomy upon the son of Herkimer this fall."¹⁸ As Fassett resumed his seat by the side of Platt, the latter said: "Well, Sloat, I knew you could eat crow, but I didn't think you liked it."

After the nomination of Miller, Stephen Van Rensselaer Crugar of Kings became the candidate for lieutenant-governor,¹⁹ and William Rumsey of Steuben for the Court of Appeals. It was called "the Soldiers' ticket." Crugar's name also added an historic interest, his great grandfather, John Crugar, having been the first Mayor of New York, while his mother's father, Stephen Van Rensselaer, the last of the great patroons and a brother-in-law of Alexander Hamilton, served as lieutenant-governor under John Jay (1795-1801). Afterwards he served in Congress, casting the vote that made John Quincy Adams the President.²⁰ Crugar

¹⁸ New York *Times*, August 29, 1888.

¹⁹ The ballot stood: Crugar, 409; John B. Weber of Buffalo, 180; Norman L. Allen, 32.

²⁰ See Vol. 1, pp. 341-3, *The Political History of the State of New York*.

had a better record as a soldier than his maternal grandfather, but his geographical location rather than his Civil War service put him over John B. Weber of Buffalo, another soldier equally gallant.

Meanwhile the Committee on Resolutions wrestled with civil service reform and temperance. It was easy to endorse the work at Chicago; to approve the record of a Republican legislature; to favour State payment of legitimate election expenses; and to denounce the administration of Governor Hill; but to emphasise reform in the civil service when men loved the "spoils," or to attempt to appease the liquor interests without displeasing the temperance sentiment, was an embarrassing problem. In the preceding winter the Legislature had passed a new Crosby bill, fixing the maximum license for liquor and beer at \$400 and \$100, and making its application State-wide. This measure the Governor also vetoed, and the condemnation inspired by his action emphasised the necessity of a clear-cut endorsement of "high license." But the Committee, knowing the hostility of delegates from the larger cities, gasped at the phrase, and when the plank finally appeared it avoided the words "high," "license," "saloon," and "Crosby bill," as artfully as Senator Evarts had buried them in 1887. "We approve," it said, "the efforts of the Republicans in the last Legislature upon the liquor question, especially the act nullified by Executive action, to restrict that traffic by charges which would lift some of the burdens of taxation caused by the liquor traffic from the home and farm; and we believe such charges should be advanced to standards similar to those successfully enforced in other States under Republican control."

Despite its circumlocution this plank approved the action of the Legislature in passing the Crosby bill, but it dodged the "standard" to which "charges" should be advanced. The Illinois standard was \$500, while that of Ohio and Connecticut, also under Republican control, was \$200. Nobody appeared anxious to discuss this point openly in the

convention. Even Warner Miller's utterances seemed guarded. Assemblyman Crosby, although he pronounced the plank better than the one in 1887, disowned it as "an iron-clad, high-license declaration." The *New York Times* called it "a straddle." Governor Hill declared it "an evasion of the boasted high license issue." But Warner Miller accepted it. "It means," he said, "that if we carry the State we will pass a high-license law. I shall make that a leading issue."

John J. O'Brien, Republican leader of the Eighth Assembly district and a satellite of Platt, thought it "too strong for the party in my locality." This was highly significant. O'Brien was not a man to regulate his conduct by the tenets of a political platform. In fact, he stood for the saloon, and his remark gave notice that any interference with it would not attract political success in his bailiwick. A more significant act, harmful to the success of Miller, appeared later in the campaign when O'Brien and other Platt lieutenants forced the nomination of Joel B. Erhart for Mayor, thus dividing the anti-Tammany forces which wished to unite in support of Abram S. Hewitt in opposition to Hugh J. Grant, the candidate of Richard Croker. O'Brien could "do business" with Grant;—he had no standing with Hewitt. Moreover, he knew Erhart's election was impossible.

CHAPTER XIV

CLEVELAND AND WARNER MILLER DEFEATED

1888

TARIFF and temperance largely absorbed the campaign of 1888. Republicans unreservedly advocated the maintenance of a high tariff, while the Democrats endorsed the Mills Bill, with their usual declaration that the interests of capital and labour should be observed in any tariff revision. The discussion was called "a campaign of education." Societies to defend protection as well as to promote tariff reform circulated pamphlets, and an unusually large number of speakers explained the significance of schedules. The Mills Bill, to the disadvantage of the Democrats, was open to the charge of being sectional in its incidence. It sacrificed protection of industries in the North and left untouched those which prospered in the South. The duty on rice remained practically unchanged, while the duty on starch, a New York industry, was cut in two. Protection on iron ore, now mined in abundance in Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee, was preserved, but greatly reduced on the finished products of iron and steel.

Both parties, deeming it necessary to avoid an increasing Treasury surplus, favoured a reduction of the revenue, the Republicans advocating a repeal of the tax upon tobacco and spirits used in the arts, a check upon the importation of articles similar to those made at home, and a more extended free-list of those not produced at home. The Democrats preferred a reduction of duties on products manufactured at home. This satisfied the President's message of December, 1887.

In the course of the campaign the Democrats charged the Republicans with turning the Mills Bill into an alarm-bell,

arousing everybody who thought his business bettered by a protective tariff. Yet the tariff discussion developed nothing new. "It is a circumstance of curious interest," says Mr. Blaine, "that nearly if not quite all the arguments used by the supporters and opponents of a protective system were presented during the passage of the first revenue bill in 1789 with a directness and an ability which have not been surpassed in any subsequent discussion."¹ Nevertheless, the canvass of 1888 proved instructive, and gratifyingly satisfactory because of its freedom from virulent personalities, of which the country had wearied in 1884. An attempt to give press publicity to a silly "whispered" story that the President abused his wife and had driven her mother from the White House, quickly received a fatal thrust when brought to Mrs. Cleveland's attention. "I can only say in answer to your letter," she wrote on June 3, 1888, "that every statement in the interview which you send me is basely false, and I pity the man who has been made the tool to give circulation to such wicked and heartless lies. I can wish the women of our country no better blessing than that their homes and their lives may be as happy, and that their husbands may be as kind and attentive, as considerate and affectionate, as mine. Very truly, Frances F. Cleveland."²

Aside from the tariff, the temperance issue aroused the deepest interest in New York. Although the plank of the Saratoga Convention was less aggressive than Warner Miller desired, he met the issue with great boldness and honest directness. He trusted nothing to the sympathy or the prepossessions of his audiences, but lucidly and with the penetrating force of argument exposed the deep-lying faults of the liquor traffic, relying upon the reason and judgment of his hearers to guide them on election day. He spoke daily, visiting fifty of the sixty counties, the extraordinary enthusiasm of his audiences endorsing his brave, honourable fight. These evidences of sympathy and approval cooled the

¹ *Twenty Years of Congress*, Vol. 1, p. 182.

² *New York Evening Post*, June 6, 1888.

Prohibition party. Greatly encouraged by its vote in 1887, it began the campaign with the avowed intention of doubling it in 1888; but as Miller proceeded, inspiring the clergy and turning the campaign into one of righteousness, its canvass began to shrivel.

Nevertheless, peculiar difficulties surrounded Miller from the outset. Governor Hill had made it plain to the thirty-five thousand saloon-keepers in the State that upon his re-election their status depended, so that long before the canvass opened an organised movement, ramified into every village, brought into being a great political force. Every saloon became a centre of political activity, from which issued a well-drilled and purse-filled corps of workers, determined at any cost and by any means to gain their ends. Miller recognised, also, that he had a most formidable opponent. Since his election in 1885 Governor Hill had gathered about him large classes of men who confided in his good faith and believed in his policies. He had played not only for the support of the liquor traffic, but for the men who desired no election restraints, and for the elements which sought privileges under the law not extended to others. Moreover, there was in his manner a distinct dash of the theatric, a sort of Sir Oracle sufficiency that impressed the masses. His oft-repeated declaration, "I am a Democrat," fixed him in the party mind as the real leader of the Democracy, and his renomination for governor justified the conviction, perhaps, that he rather than Cleveland represented the party. Many local leaders regarded him as a man of destiny, and their preparations to receive and hear him made his coming an event sufficient to turn the occasion into a holiday. His health was drunk at every table around which a merry company gathered, and at the larger meetings it was especially noticeable that the applause greeting his name was always a little longer in duration than that elicited by the mention of Cleveland. Yet it was manifest that Cleveland commanded the highest respect of his party. His message in the preceding December had stamped him

as a leader, having the courage of his convictions, and the campaign of 1888 is usually taken as the date when his influence and repute were at their height. Indeed the preference shown the President by the better element of the party tended to nettle the Governor, who resented the cry of evil doing which really followed him through life.

It is not surprising, perhaps, that one of Governor Hill's ambition, energy, and capacity should seek, for the sake of his own career, to evade identification with the liquor traffic and with corruption at the polls. In the conduct of private business affairs nobody could be more careful, more methodical, or more precise. He was, too, a total abstainer from intoxicating liquors and from tobacco, and furnished no trace of any irregular indulgence. Moreover, he assumed to deprecate the liquor traffic, and to desire the reform of election abuses, insisting that he differed from his opponents only upon the method of regulation. So he vetoed the liquor bill of 1887 because it applied only to New York City and Brooklyn; the so-called Vedder Bill because it diverted the revenues from municipalities to counties under a cumbersome State system intended to embarrass the solution of the entire excise problem; and the famous bill of 1888 because "hypocrisy is stamped upon nearly every page and line of the measure." So, in the matter of electoral reform, he vetoed whatever would aid in preventing illegal voting on the ground that illiterate and naturalised citizens must not be hampered at the ballot-box. Thus, whatever the reasons given, the result of his vetoes benefited the saloon and continued fraudulent voting.

But that which stung the Governor most deeply in the campaign of 1888 was the exploitation of the recently discovered evidence associating his name with the Aqueduct abuses. "It has been proved and nobody denies the fact," wrote George William Curtis, "that David B. Hill's friend, law-partner, and factotum, William L. Muller, asked for and obtained the votes of a majority of the Aqueduct Commission in favour of giving to John O'Brien, Hill's political

manager, at figures \$50,000 in excess of the lowest bid, a certain aqueduct contract. Muller gave several of the Commissioners to understand, as they swore under oath, that Hill wanted O'Brien to receive this contract. Out of the profits thus dishonestly made, O'Brien paid a note, signed by Hill and Muller, for \$10,000, the proceeds of which, previously obtained by O'Brien from a bank, had been given to Muller for use in Hill's last campaign (1885) just a few days before the election took place." ³ In explanation the Governor admitted that near the close of the campaign of 1885 he "loaned the credit of his name" to the Democratic State Committee, of which John O'Brien was the chairman, by signing a note afterwards endorsed by Muller and negotiated by O'Brien; but of the excess contract and the payment of the note he had no information to give. His subsequent appointment of Muller to the Supreme Court and of O'Brien as receiver of the Broadway Railroad Company, however, added to the people's distrust. "The political situation in this State," said the *Nation*, "is rather worse than it was when Tweed was plundering in New York and the Canal Ring was plundering at Albany. We say it was rather worse, because the Governor of the State at that time was personally honest." ⁴

In the presence of such conditions it is not surprising that an organisation of resolute Democrats and Independents should make a thorough canvass of the State in opposition to Governor Hill's re-election. Energy and enthusiasm characterised their work, and with ample means they disseminated information, argument, and appeal. But the result of the election proved that it had been easier to get Republican aid for Hill than Democratic votes for Warner Miller, for although the latter reduced the Prohibition vote more than 10,000, Hill obtained a plurality of 19,171.

Referring to the spirit and temper of many Republican campaigners, Miller admitted that a disbelief in the success of his efforts had possessed him from the first, adding,

³ *Harper's Weekly*, September 29, 1888, p. 726.

⁴ *The New York Nation*, 1888, p. 222.

with some show of pique: "I had to make the fight practically alone on the high license issue."⁵ Platt declared that "Miller defeated himself by making what I regarded as a very injudicious speech on the liquor question."⁶ This opinion generally obtained among organisation workers. Miller's immediate friends, in the language of baseball players, called it "a sacrifice hit." General Harrison wired Miller: "I am greatly grieved at your defeat. If the intrepid leader fell outside the breastworks, the column, inspired by his courage, went on to victory."⁷

Republicans generally attributed Harrison's plurality of 13,002 to the tariff.⁸ Hill's friends ascribed it to the President's message, while Cleveland's supporters charged it solely to the conduct of the Governor and his managers. "The result would have been different," said the Brooklyn *Eagle*, "had a candidate for Governor been secured whose atmosphere and record corresponded with those of the President, and whose friends would not have been the President's enemies."⁹ It was well-known that Cleveland did not have the united support of his party in New York. Abram S. Hewitt, then the Mayor, would not enter into the campaign, and old friends of former Governor Tilden showed much displeasure by the President's apparently studied neglect of his wishes. It was also said that many Independents, who disliked the Administration's insincere treatment of civil service reform and the renomination of Hill, declined to vote any part of the Democratic ticket.¹⁰ Another and not less important reason, perhaps, sourced in Cleveland's apparent hostility toward pension legislation. In one year he vetoed 123 private pension bills out of 977 passed by Congress.

⁵ New York *Tribune*, November 16, 1888.

⁶ Harrison, *Speeches and Papers*, p. 189.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ The official totals were as follows: Harrison, 648,759; Cleveland, 635,757; Hill, 650,467; Miller, 631,293; Jones, Prohibition, 30,215. The Electoral vote stood, Harrison, 233; Cleveland, 168.

⁹ November 7, 1888.

¹⁰ Dewey, *National Problems*, p. 145.

That he gave each bill a personal examination, acting with judicial fairness, did not excuse him in the opinion of veterans, who charged him with Southern sympathies. It added to this resentment that he also vetoed the dependent pension bill. Quite as detrimental was the promulgation of an Executive order returning to the Southern States the Confederate battle-flags captured during the war. Although the President subsequently revoked the order since it required legislative action, it served to deepen the animosities and to more fully unite the old soldiers in support of General Harrison, one of their comrades.

CHAPTER XV.

PLATT CHECKED—HILL SUPREME

1889

IN the opinion of his friends Warner Miller's defeat made him a logical candidate for the Cabinet, and the President-elect's picturesque message of sympathy gave them confidence. But a rival appeared in Thomas C. Platt. Immediately Miller's supporters challenged his right to the preference. Members of the Union League Club advised Harrison that Platt, although an able business man and a cool, political intriguer, whose established relations with local politicians enabled him to secure delegates and select candidates, could not be ranked with party leaders of acknowledged statesmanship or be trusted to select proper men to represent his administration. Moreover, unless allowed his way, he would thwart the President's policies and otherwise embarrass him.¹ On the other hand, Miller had displayed courage and zeal in the campaign, greatly reduced the Prohibitionist vote, and would exert a healthy influence in the party councils of the State.

Platt, however, was not a man to submit without an effort. He thought himself competent for secretary of the treasury. "From my college days," he wrote, "I had made an assiduous study of financial questions. As president of express, railroad, coal and iron, and other corporations, I had learned a great deal about fiscal affairs. Indeed, I had for many years been very ambitious to conduct the Government finances."² In addition to his fitness he based his

¹ "Mischief makers went to the White House. Warner Miller was a frequent complainant against me. So were Cornelius N. Bliss and other members of the Union League Club." T. C. Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 217.

² *Ibid.*, p. 206.

claim upon "a letter in President Harrison's own handwriting promising the appointment."³ This alleged letter excited much speculation, especially after the President denied writing or making any promise. People wondered that in a matter of such importance he did not produce the letter, or at least present the evidence of some one who had seen it. Instead, he offered a statement by John S. Clarkson of Iowa, based wholly upon hearsay. "It remains unsolved or at least unproved," Clarkson wrote, "whether General Harrison did tender Mr. Platt the secretaryship of the treasury. . . . The truth may have been perjured by an intermediary."⁴

This intimation of "perjury by an intermediary" indicated Clarkson's acceptance of a campaign story that Stephen B. Elkins of West Virginia, when seeking support for Harrison, had dangled a very tempting bait before Platt. The nature of the bait no one knew, but Elkins denied making a promise or using any misleading expressions. Senator Sherman, deeply affected by his defeat, assumed some corrupt bargain, "which in no wise involved Harrison," had influenced the result. His suspicion, however, lacked any corroborating circumstance, since Platt's attitude did not change until ballot developments made it plain that Harrison would win.

But Platt, insisting he had a promise, accepted defeat slowly. He relied upon Senator Hiscock, whose agreeable relations with Harrison made him a desirable mediator, and when told of the President's firm refusal he cast about for one with whom he could act in concert, finally agreeing upon Benjamin F. Tracy of Brooklyn, who preferred to be attorney-general, but became secretary of the navy. Tracy had an attractive career. He received a medal of honour for gallantry at the battle of the Wilderness, served with credit in the Assembly, as a district attorney of the State and of the United States, and as a judge of the Court of Appeals. His speeches and State papers gave abundant evidence of a

³ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 206.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

high order of talent, which notable achievements at the bar emphasised. Such a man the President found it easy to accept, especially as his name appeared in a list left by his visitors from the Union League Club. Nevertheless, Platt did not forgive the President, nor retain his former confidence in Hiscock. He suspected, and perhaps properly so, that the Senator thought it better for himself that another be selected. As a matter of fact, however, Hiscock was not ignorant of the President's mind respecting Platt. In character and methods they were as unlike as Cleveland and Hill.

Platt "solaced" himself with the thought that he had kept Miller out of the cabinet,⁵ while Miller became resentful and depressed. To be a harmony candidate for governor he had sacrificed his manly independence at Chicago, and his subsequent defeat left him much in the condition of Samson after Delilah shaved off "the seven locks of his head." Now, with Tracy in the cabinet, Hiscock in the Senate, and Morton as Vice-President, his future seemed hazy. However, he pocketed his resentment, and with a languid hope of succeeding Senator Evarts in 1891, he appeared at the Republican State Convention which met at Saratoga on September 25, 1889.

The convention, though laden with distrust and disappointment, exhibited a surface harmony that blends with confidence. It applauded Miller, rejected John J. O'Brien's delegation, approved the Harrison administration, demanded "the purification and elevation of the civil service," pledged anew its determination to secure ballot-reform, and caustically arraigned Governor Hill as a "public enemy" for repeatedly vetoing bills restricting the liquor traffic and penalising corruption at elections. Yet the defeat of Miller seemed to stimulate the belief that a radical stand on temperance created more deserters than recruits, and approaching the question more cautiously, it declared that "no steps backward will be taken, and we pledge our determination

⁵ *Autobiography*, p. 207.

to persevere until salutary and adequate provisions of law are embodied in the statutes of the State." This might be high license or low license or no license, said the Independent press, but it would be "salutary and adequate," whatever that might mean.

The nomination of candidates followed without serious contest.⁶ Republican success in State elections had become too infrequent to arouse fierce competition, but the absence of it secured excellent men. Though he pronounced it "a Platt Convention," George William Curtis graciously praised the nominees as "irreproachable."⁷

One week later (October 1) the Democrats met in State Convention at Syracuse. If, as Platt surmised, the election in 1888 had stranded Warner Miller,⁸ it had put David B. Hill on the crest of the wave. His sway in the party camp became supreme. No king ever waited his own pleasure before making his will known to obedient vassals, and no subject ever more courteously obeyed the royal nod. Yet his success did not foster a temper incompatible with modesty. He did not give commands. Roosevelt dictated and talked loudly at times. Platt was an "easy" boss only when indifferent. If obstinately opposed Cleveland became indignant and expressed it. Hill was smoother. He preferred the indirect or diplomatic method, yet leaving a fixed impression of what he wanted. But after his re-election in 1888 an extraordinary sense of his importance to the party brought a vision of the Presidency that excluded all rivals. If not forgotten, Cleveland was ignored. Indeed, when the Committee on Resolutions received the party platform, prepared by the Governor, it did not mention the former President, although several conventions already held

⁶ The candidates were: Secretary of State, John I. Gilbert, Franklin; Comptroller, Martin W. Cooke, Rochester; Treasurer, Ira M. Hedges, Nyack; Attorney-General, James M. Varnum, New York; Engineer, William Van Rensselaer, New York; Judge Court of Appeals, Albert Haight, Buffalo.

⁷ *Harper's Weekly*, 1889, p. 790.

⁸ *Autobiography*, p. 192.

in other States had endorsed his "honest and fearless administration."

This omission, however, betrayed no greater presumption than the liquor-traffic plank which Hill made more important than ever, declaring opposition to "all sumptuary legislation that needlessly interfered with personal liberty or the reasonable customs of the people." It was evident the Governor felt much surer in bidding for the liquor vote than Platt did in appealing to the temperance vote. With still less regard for those of his party who urged the necessity of various reforms and of relieving it from entangling alliances, the Governor ordered the renomination of the old ticket, including the Comptroller and Attorney-General,⁹ who figured in the Assembly chamber-ceiling incident. This represented an abstraction from the State Treasury of \$100,000. There were deep mutterings of dissent. Delegates felt uncertain as to the propriety or safety of committing themselves to such a handicap. Two investigations had developed the affair into a State-wide scandal, and an approval of the accused would humiliate the party if it did not bring deserved defeat. But the Governor held the convention completely in his hand, and except an added clause to the platform endorsing the late Administration, everything as originally proposed by him found acceptance.

The campaign, in which the Governor personally defended the Comptroller and Attorney-General, followed the usual quiescent course of an off-year contest. The Republican Congress, elected in 1888, had not yet assembled. Nor had anything occurred in Washington to give point or push to the canvass. Grover Cleveland, in the practice of his profession in New York, already seemed a back-number. His name received scant mention in the campaign. He was invited neither to speak nor to counsel. Meanwhile the

⁹ The candidates were: Secretary of State, Frederick Cook, Monroe; Comptroller, Edward Wemple, Fulton; Treasurer, Lawrence J. Fitzgerald, Cortlandt; Attorney-General, Charles E. Tabor, Erie; Engineer, John Bogert, New York; Court of Appeals, Dennis O'Brien, Jefferson.

election resulted favourably for the Democrats, the pluralities ranging from 9,711 for Attorney-General to 20,527 for Secretary of State, the total vote being one-fourth less than that for Governor in 1888.¹⁰ The Republicans were aghast at the result, which exceeded their worst apprehensions. Even Democrats were surprised that Comptroller Wemple and Attorney-General Tabor won. It is another illustration, said Curtis, that Platt is not good enough or bad enough to play a successful part in opposition to Hill.

¹⁰ For Secretary of State, Democrat 505,894, Republican 485,367, Prohibition 26,763; Legislature, Republican—Senate 19, Assembly 71; Democrat—Senate 13, Assembly 57. Pluralities of State officials: Secretary of State Cook, 20,527; Comptroller Wemple, 11,190; Treasurer Danforth, 13,955; Atty.-Gen. Tabor, 9,711; Engineer Bogert, 16,981; Court of Appeals O'Brien, 15,702.

CHAPTER XVI

DEMOCRATS GAIN THE ASSEMBLY

1890

THE result of the election in 1889 increased Governor Hill's Presidential aspirations. It re-emphasised his complete mastery of the party in New York, which controlled the election of a Democrat for President, and with an assurance born of unexampled success he made no secret of his ambition. He thoroughly believed in his own genius, but in cutting his way to party dictatorship he had not failed to observe that the unsatisfied appeals for ballot reform had weakened him outside the State, while his complete union with Tammany Hall contributed to a growing opposition in his party within the State. Already signs indicated an organised protest, led by vigorous representatives of the Young Men's Democratic Club, which had assisted in breaking Tweed's criminal rule.

As these influences threatened to imperil his control, if not to disappoint his ambition, he began to play the part of a reformer, recommending in his message of 1890 an extension of the Corrupt Practice Act, which required candidates to file expense statements. He also proposed quo warranto proceedings by any candidate for the ousting of a successful competitor where bribery could be proved. To check the ease by which legislative majorities could be changed into minorities, he proposed an amendment to the State Constitution transferring contested election cases from the Legislature to the Courts. A Republican legislature promptly acted upon the suggestion requiring candidates to file expense statements, which the Governor approved.

But the reform that most appealed to the best men of all parties concerned corruption and intimidation at the polls.

The Governor so understood it. His veto based upon the unconstitutionality of the Saxton-Electoral Bill betrayed a consciousness of the sentiment which strongly supported the Australian ballot, adopted in Massachusetts in 1888, and now proving its worth by purifying elections. This method of voting provided for the official printing of ballots, their distribution to voters only by sworn officers of the election, and secured the isolation of the voter while preparing his ballot. Everywhere public opinion approved the radical change, and the New York Legislature early in the session of 1890 adopted it. As this innovation reduced the power of the political boss, however, it did not appeal to Richard Croker, who preferred the old way, which compelled each voter to take a ballot from the hand of a sub-boss and hold it up in full view of the watchers until deposited in the box. To substitute for this practice a system that allowed Tammany's rank and file to receive an official ballot containing the names of all candidates and thus enable them secretly to vote their own choice, seemed unthinkable, and he so informed the Governor, who constantly conferred with him. Finally, to meet the ever-increasing demand of public opinion, Hill proposed as an amendment to the Saxton-Electoral Bill the use of a "paster." This was a complete party ticket to be given each voter, which he could easily paste upon the official ballot. It relieved the illiterate, enabled all to vote quickly, and, although it did not necessarily destroy their liberty of choice, it crippled the ban of secrecy, since any delay in the booth indicated a disposition to ignore the paster. It was a cunning contrivance, quite in keeping with Croker's methods, which subsequently became a sharp issue between the parties; but for the present the Legislature, preferring half a loaf to none, wisely adopted it, since it gave to every one who really desired it full opportunity to vote secretly.

In the meantime the friends of honest government in New York City were occupied in an effort to defeat Tammany Hall. The election of Mayor Grant in 1888 had made Rich-

ard Croker supreme. Whatever he demanded the Mayor approved. Grant divided with him his enormous fees, while Hill too often deferred to his advice. The disclosures of the Fassett investigating committee classified Croker with Tweed, and in the popular mind he represented tyrannical power and unholy greed. His defeat, therefore, seemed absolutely necessary, and to compass it an organised movement, known as "The People's League," proposed presenting a People's ticket. This combination, backed by citizens who had gained prestige in the overthrow of Tweed, rapidly gathered strength. The Republicans, cautious at first, finally joined it, while the managers of the County Democracy, representing the Cleveland contingent, gave it effective support. The spirit of the clergy testified to the vehemence of their interest, and the persistency of their work brought to the surface a deep, determined sentiment to place the city government in honest hands. The selection in the middle of October of a full City ticket, made up of forceful, well-known representatives of all parties, headed by Francis M. Scott, seemed the finishing touch needed to make success certain. Scott bore an ideal record. He had assisted in organising the Young Men's Democratic Club, which aided in breaking Tweed's power; he had backed Governor Tilden during Kelly's rebellion, and as an Aqueduct commissioner, appointed by Mayor Hewitt, he had deprived grafters of their ability to rob the city. Moreover, he possessed, what Hewitt lacked, a pleasing personality. He could be firm and affable, tenacious and kind, resolute and patient, and single-minded without narrowness.

This movement greatly disturbed Croker, who distrusted the reform ballot act as much as the League relied upon it. It added to his solicitude that the County Democracy would make no concessions, and that the Republicans, contrary to their custom, refused to put up a separate ticket. This left him no alternative except to renominate Grant and the old ticket, laden with their corrupt records. Against them all the anti-Tammany elements massed in opposition. It

had long been a theory that these elements, once sincerely united, could win, and under the leadership of Scott a victory seemed certain.

Meanwhile the Fifty-first Congress began its work. After six years of Democratic control in the House the Republicans had returned to power, with Thomas B. Reed as Speaker, whose new rules enabled a small majority, by counting a quorum, to do business. Among other measures it passed the Sherman anti-trust law, the Silver-Purchase act, and laid the foundation for a sufficient Navy, its appropriations exceeding a billion dollars. Accepting the victory of 1888 as a mandate to revise the tariff, it also enacted what popularly became known as the "McKinley Bill." To satisfy the Central Western States it increased the duty on agricultural products, the better grades of woollen clothes, and on tin-plate. In order to relieve the troublesome problem of a surplus it extended the free-list to include commodities which did not compete with domestic production, while it removed the duty on raw sugar, but paid a bounty to Louisiana producers. It also recognised the principles of reciprocity, forced into it by Secretary of State Blaine. The consideration of this measure, held up in the Senate, dragged through the summer, delaying its final enactment until October 1, 1890. Hardly had it become the law, however, before merchants and tradesmen, to readjust trade conditions and especially to secure an exceptional temporary profit, raised retail prices. These general advances at once became the issue during the thirty days that remained before the congressional, legislative, and local elections occurred.¹

Democratic speakers enlarged upon the workingman's new burdens, which included his coal, his clothes, carpets, tableware, and kitchen utensils. A list of these increases, printed in cold type, excited the attention of every house-

¹ As no State official other than a judge of the Court of Appeals was to be elected, both parties, without a convention, agreed upon the re-election of Robert Earl of Herkimer, the Democratic incumbent.

holder. The duty on fresh fish, formerly free, was fixed at 1 cent a pound; on eggs, 5 cents a dozen; on every cabbage, 3 cents; on barley, 10 to 30 cents a bushel; on butter, 4 to 6 cents a pound; on potatoes, 15 to 25 cents a bushel; while the duty on oranges and lemons was trebled. A raise of two and a half cents a pound on tin-plate made an excuse for largely increasing the price of all canned goods. It was the opportunity of the profiteer!

Republicans endeavoured to show that short crops, a greater demand for goods, and especially a country-wide profiteering, accounted for prices greatly in excess of a normal profit under the new tariff. Moreover, insufficient time prevented an opportunity for the law, which had been carefully drawn to protect, foster, and diversify American industry, to work out its intrinsic merits. To the cry of a "Billion Dollar Congress," raised because of the large appropriations for the new navy, Speaker Reed answered: "The United States is a billion dollar country." But people were resentful. Preceding years had disclosed no such apparent extravagance, and they refused to accept a brilliant reply as a sufficient reason for alleged wasteful legislation. A far greater cause for Democratic attacks, however, sourced in the Speaker's counting a quorum. This act had provoked the most riotous conduct, giving him the title of "tyrant" and "czar." In Blaine's phrase it seemed as if the House "stood on the very brink of a volcano." To make the act more obnoxious the opposition declared that only by such an iniquitous, unconstitutional usurpation of power did the McKinley Bill become a law. Election day, therefore, found folks in a mood to smash things, and the Democrats greatly benefited everywhere throughout the country. In New York they obtained control of the Assembly, giving them a United States senator.

It proved a severe blow to "The People's League," a non-partisan organisation in New York City, which promised the defeat of Croker's candidate for mayor. But the movement got tangled up with the McKinley Bill contest, result-

ing in the re-election of Mayor Grant.² Indeed, a greater surprise had not often been seen in party annals. "All of Cleveland's friends and his own personal and political sympathies," said the *Sun*, "were on the side of the anti-Democracy. His most intimate associates were engaged in the conspiracy to wreck and ruin Tammany Hall. His Secretary of the Treasury was on the stump for Tom Platt and anti-Democracy. So far as the Scott movement was not a Republican movement, it was a Grover Cleveland movement."³ Nor did Platt escape the thrusts of his opponents. "Since the little Tiogan boss began to rattle around in the place left vacant by Roscoe Conkling," said the *World*, "the Democrats have carried the State at every election."⁴

² Grant's majority, 21,212. The Legislature stood: Senate, 19 Reps., 13 Dems.; Assembly, 60 Reps., 68 Dems. The House of Representatives, 235 Dems., 88 Reps.

³ November 6, 1890.

⁴ November 7.

CHAPTER XVII

FLOWER DEFEATS FASSETT FOR GOVERNOR

1891

EARLY in the summer of 1890 Governor Hill, in urging upon William C. Whitney and Daniel S. Lamont the importance of carrying the Assembly, suggested, in the event of success, the election of Smith M. Weed to the United States Senate to succeed William M. Evarts. Later, Hill discussed the subject with Weed, who rallied the Cleveland element for the contest. Charles A. Dana of the *New York Sun*, understanding that the caucus would agree upon him, contributed his powerful influence. Edward Murphy was also jollied.

But after the election revealed, to the tremendous surprise of both parties, a Democratic legislative majority of two on joint-ballot, the Governor's passion to be President became exceedingly acute. At this moment his influence may be said to have reached its zenith. Indeed, it is difficult to appreciate his hold upon the party, which willingly credited him with carrying the State and securing a sufficient majority to elect a senator. It savoured of idolatry. Whatever would reward him, that he could have, and the Presidency dazzled his intimates no less than himself. It would be a mistake to say that Hill ever lost his head, but he lost his feet. He now believed Cleveland without the slightest claim to a third nomination, and thus the senatorship immediately appealed to him as a sort of lever by which he might be lifted into the higher office. For this purpose he preferred Alton B. Parker, perhaps his ablest, most trusted and intimate friend, who had all the fire of proud, indomitable youth in his voice and manner. He had conducted Hill's campaign in 1885, charmed Prohibitionists into help-

ers, and won cheers from many audiences by his spirited addresses. Since then his fairness and patience as a Supreme Court judge had gained the respect of Bar and litigants wherever he held court. The influence of such a man in the United States Senate would permeate every State, and only the good spots in his friend's chequered career would be burnished. But Parker withstood persuasion. This left the Governor embarrassed. Smith M. Weed, a strong Cleveland man, could not subserve his purpose. Nor did he believe Murphy, whose mouth watered when he encouraged him, could be of any real assistance. To conceal his tergiversation, therefore, he declared his inability, with a margin of only two majority, to secure the election of any one other than himself.

This raised a question as to the wisdom of his taking the senatorship. Some friends thought it would prove an obstacle in his way to the Presidency. What of Whitney and the Weed coteries, if once aroused? Others believed a seat in the Senate would strengthen him. The *New York World* (Nov. 7, 1890) declared "the idea that election to and service in the Senate would injure him as a possible Presidential candidate is wholly fallacious. Governor Hill would go to the Senate as the most conspicuous representative and leader of the great political revolution of 1890, and the national fame which he would thus advance could not fail to promote rather than to hinder any natural ambition which he may cherish for a higher place."

Nevertheless, the old adage "a bird in hand" lingered in the Governor's mind, especially since his recent speaking tour in the South, at the request of the National Democratic Committee, had revealed a strong sentiment favouring the renomination of Cleveland, based on the assumption that the great victory of 1890 throughout the country sourced in the issue which the latter had forced upon the party by his message of 1887. Doubtless such remembrances possessed him during a conference with Sheehan and Murphy, for upon leaving him the latter said: "I believe the old man

wants it himself.”¹ That the members of the Legislature also understood his mind was evidenced at the caucus and at the election, the first joint-ballot of the two Houses giving Hill, 81; Evarts, 79. Thus began Weed’s enmity, which extended to the Whitney group, and made Murphy distrustful.

After his election the troublesome question arose whether he should take his seat before the expiration of his term as Governor. Some argued that he would “lose his grip on the party machine”; others deplored the promotion of Lieutenant-Governor Jones, a Clevelandite, who would doubtless endeavour to succeed himself. On the other hand, several devoted friends, among them William F. Sheehan, thought he should resign when his term as Senator began, since people would resent as indecent, even swinish, the holding of two high offices at the same time. Sheehan had entered the Legislature in the year Hill became Governor, displaying a parliamentary skill and the resourcefulness of a well-equipped debater that soon made him floor-leader of the minority. Although his activities did not always conform to the golden rule, nor his methods betray a high respect for the square deal, his cordial manners extended his popularity to both sides of the Assembly. During these years he companioned with Richard Croker, Edward Murphy Jr., and with the Governor. When his party finally obtained control of the Assembly, it elected him Speaker, the youngest but one of those who had preceded him.² Thereupon he assumed a leadership without as well as within the Assembly. Hill tolerated but rarely agreed with him. In the present instance Sheehan was clearly right, arguing that the Governor would be violating a sound American principle. In most Commonwealths it was repugnant to constitutional law for one holding a State office to accept a Federal office without resigning the former, as the American theory of government assumed the harmonious operation of two sets of

¹ New York *Tribune*, March 31, 1891.

² Edward L. Pitts, 1867.

laws and two sets of administrators. The only danger to this dual arrangement grew out of the encroachment of one upon the other, and to obviate such a clash of authority it seemed necessary to keep the two parts separate. New York's constitution did not avow this principle except as to members of the Legislature, but as there seemed more reasons for applying it to the Governor, who is the Executive voice of the State, the belief obtained that he would grossly violate a principle which, if not explicitly prohibited by law, was settled by precedent established by Governor Van Buren.

Nevertheless, the Governor did not resign. To the declaration that he would not, under the rules of the Senate, be accounted a member of that body until he qualified, it was said in reply that allowing the Legislature to adjourn without electing a successor completed his acceptance, and that in law as well as in fact he was New York's senator and New York's governor. "We do not hesitate to say," declared the *Tribune*, in voicing the sentiment of his betrayal of the State, "that no other man in public life to-day except Governor Hill would be guilty of such misconduct and continue to hold up his head."³ Thereafter he was derisively called the "Governor-Senator."

As an apparent rebuke for this display of selfishness, the Spring elections (1891) proved favourable to the Republicans. Besides losing several mayors of cities, the Democrats suffered a net loss of one hundred and thirty-one county supervisors, which seriously abridged their control. "In the interior of the State," said the *New York World*, "the Democratic papers ascribe these reverses to an anti-Hill tidal-wave."⁴

These gains aroused the hope of Republican leaders that a strong, popular candidate for Governor might succeed in November, and after much inquiry Andrew D. White seemed to measure up to the desired standard. To the people of New York his name had been familiar for a quar-

³ *New York Tribune*, March 31, 1891.

⁴ June 18, 1891.

ter of a century—ever since the historic struggle to secure a charter for the Cornell University. Moreover, he was not a stranger to politicians, having been a State Senator, a useful speaker in campaigns, and a delegate-at-large to the Republican National Convention in 1884. President Grant and Senator Conkling had shown their friendship by making him a commissioner to Santo Domingo (1871), and Senator Evarts, when Secretary of State under President Hayes, had manifested high esteem by securing his appointment as minister to Germany. But apart from his high character and distinguished services, several reasons combined to make White a strong candidate. His agreeable relations with the alumni of Cornell, who were scattered over the State, many of them influential in their several localities, assured him of a corps of active workers. More potential would be the support of German-Americans, who favoured him not only by reason of his approved conduct as an ambassador and his appreciation of German literature, but because of his small sympathy with Warner Miller's extreme temperance views. Indeed, leading Germans who had for some time voted with the Democratic party, pledged him their aid if nominated, with promises to bring to his assistance two leading Democratic journals. These generous assurances of support interested him, and, upon the advice of friends, he sought an interview with Platt. He went "reluctantly." Between him and the Tiogan chieftain there was little in common. He had companioned with George William Curtis; his civil service record distinguished him as an ardent reformer, and as a delegate-at-large, in company with Theodore Roosevelt, he had earnestly supported Senator Edmunds.

Nevertheless, Platt received him kindly. Disheartened by the result of the election in 1890, a burning desire to buttress his assumed control with a victory made him conciliatory. He desired especially to eliminate the handicap of his own unpopularity by the selection of a candidate who could bring elements of strength without the weakness of being

known as "Platt's man." To White some admitted obstacles existed. When a State senator (1863-7) his opposition to giving a large tract of Ward's Island to a Roman Catholic institution presented an excuse for hostility. Moreover, one at least of his numerous publications had provoked a feeling of resentment on the part of men less liberal in their religious views. Platt, however, did not value these objections as of consequence, and having secured the approval of a group of loyal adherents, White became the accepted Platt candidate.

Meanwhile other candidates appeared, notably Philip Becker, former mayor of Buffalo, James W. Wadsworth of Geneseo, former State Comptroller, and Stewart L. Woodford of Brooklyn. As delegates assembled for the State convention, which met at Rochester on September 9, murmurs of opposition to White began to be heard, based upon expressions in his book on *Warfare and Science*, published in 1876, in which he characterised certain articles of Christian dogma as superstition. A strong suspicion existed that this objection veiled a dislike of his civil service reform sympathies. With it also came a demand from the younger delegates for the nomination of J. Sloat Fassett. Platt had previously opposed the Senator's selection. While professing friendship he disliked the independence Fassett had manifested during his three years' service as temporary president of the Senate, especially his refusal to companion with the so-called "black-horse cavalry," and "to close his eyes" when cautioned to do so. As the demand of the younger element increased, however, he let matters drift. Meanwhile White, learning of the opposition and of Platt's apparent indifference, withdrew from the contest. It was a calm, dignified letter. He voiced neither regret nor bad faith, but six years later his positive refusal to speak to Platt respecting an appointment as ambassador to Germany, although President McKinley, who desired to make it, requested him to do so, showed that he deeply resented his earlier treatment.

The younger delegates based their demand for Senator Fassett upon his aptitude for public affairs, his competency in telling expression, and his readiness as a dexterous debater of notable courage, who never resorted to the varnish of soft words or relaxed a hard grip on the matter in hand. It added to his prestige that he had no sympathy with Governor Hill's views or methods, which an article in the *Review of Reviews*⁵ and his piquant speech for Warner Miller disclosed. But Fassett was not a candidate.⁶ Whatever visions he may have earlier nourished quickly vanished when Platt accepted White. Besides, he was Collector of the Port of New York, a high and an honourable office, and instead of attending the convention he had boarded a revenue cutter with the Secretary of the Treasury for an official trip along the New England coast. When the boat reached New London, however, a telegram called him to Rochester, where he found a well-organised boom, apparently equivalent to a nomination. Fassett deprecated the movement. The principal reason that qualified White as a desirable candidate disqualified him, for, although he would be under no obligation to the former Senator, he would be handicapped as "Platt's man."

The spontaneity of Fassett's call, however, blocked his retreat. The moment he reached Rochester a throng of delegates took possession of him, and like a man in the Niagara rapids the irresistible current swept him onward. "It was a genuinely spontaneous movement, without premeditation," said the *Tribune*, "and yet so strong that no man could have withstood or resisted it. Never was there a more vivid illustration of the nomination seeking the man."⁷ Even Platt, who still withheld his warrant, lacked the nerve to intervene.

⁵ Vol. 5, p. 26.

⁶ See his letter of September 7 to Charles E. Coon of New York, then assistant secretary of the Treasury, *New York Tribune*, September 18, 1891.

⁷ *New York Tribune*, September 18, 1891.

Nevertheless, before the close of the nominating speeches, Daniel J. Kenefick of Buffalo, a young delegate of marked ability, whom a storm of hisses could not intimidate, charged that Fassett's candidacy, like that of Judge Folger in 1882, had its inception and strength in the wishes of the Federal Administration, and that a repetition of such tactics would again be rebuked at the polls. It was a telling speech in behalf of Philip Becker, a popular German-American of high character, and indicated what Fassett feared, that though nominated without machine influence, it would not absolve him from the distrust which found expression in Kenefick's fearless utterances. But the die was cast. On the first ballot he received 523 votes to 18 for Joseph B. Carr, 55 for Becker, and 88 for Woodford. Fassett's admirable speech of acceptance, in which he united the loftiest ideals of public duty with the glory of words, commended him. Indeed, the convention esteemed itself fortunate to head its ticket with one who evidenced such qualities of head and heart.

Other nominations were made by acclamation.⁸

The platform adhered to the principles adopted in 1888; commended the Harrison administration; the McKinley Act; the Blaine reciprocity; the policy of maintaining gold and silver at a parity; civil service reform; and a comprehensive and efficient law giving local option or license to counties, towns and cities as each might prefer. It condemned the Hill administration, the refusal of the Legislature to allow a canal investigation, and Speaker Sheehan's denial of the right of petition.

⁸ Lt.-Gov., John W. Vrooman, Herkimer; Secretary of State, Eugene F. O'Connor, Brooklyn; Treasurer, Ira M. Hedges, Haverstraw; Comptroller, Arthur C. Wade, Jamestown; Atty.-General, William A. Sutherland, Rochester; State Engineer, Verplanck A. Colvin, Albany.

Vrooman had recently retired as grand-master of the Masons; O'Connor was a former State Senator of large influence; Hedges had a brilliant war record; Wade and Sutherland were leading lawyers in their respective cities; and Colvin famous as the original surveyor of the Adirondack region.

Meantime the Democrats began moving toward Saratoga. In preparing for the State convention Sheehan stealthily Tammanyised the organisation in Buffalo, defeated delegates friendly to Cleveland, and then announced himself a candidate for lieutenant-governor on a ticket to be headed by Roswell P. Flower, whom Croker and Murphy preferred. When this declaration reached the Governor, he expressed a preference for a Rochester aspirant, less dominating if not more loyal. Immediately Sheehan took the train for Albany, met Croker and Murphy, and upon his insistence the notable twain visited Hill. This interview presented thrilling possibilities. Their support of Flower for governor contrary to his wishes had tempted him to announce his candidacy for a third term, thus not only removing Flower, whom he suspected of Presidential ambition, but furnishing fresh evidence of his own ability to carry the State. Sheehan had discouraged this movement as he did the retention of the governorship, which Hill, of course, deeply resented. When Croker and Murphy, therefore, interceded for the dashing young Speaker, the Governor coolly informed them that he should advise any delegates visiting him to ignore Sheehan. "Most men would have weakened at this," said the *World*, "for a mere word from the Governor has meant votes cast any way he desired." But with equal coolness they declared their intention of supporting Sheehan. No one lost his temper. Nor did any one convey the impression that the interview had chilled their relations. Yet for the first time Hill recognised the existence of a "trinity" that could sway caucuses and control conventions. Indeed, by the time the convention met on September 16, the most unobservant delegate knew that bad faith with Weed, refusal to resign the governorship, and especially his transfer to the Senate, had weakened, for the moment at least, Hill's grip on the party machine. He had preferred Alfred C. Chapin of Brooklyn for governor, Donald McNaughton, the venerable State senator from Rochester, for lieutenant-governor, and Isaac H. Maynard for

attorney-general; but at the convention none of them were mentioned save Chapin, the use of whose name gave Kings County an opportunity to club Flower.

In fact, after the convention had excluded the County Democracy and the Cleveland delegates from Buffalo, opposition to the Murphy-Crocker-Sheehan slate could be registered only by McLaughlin's delegation. This avenue of antagonism could not be closed, and at the appointed time, after the Tammany orators had presented Roswell P. Flower, declaring him "the flower that will not fade," William C. DeWitt of Brooklyn boldly threw a bomb which for the moment turned a peaceful convention into a riotous mob. "By nominating a flamboyant millionaire," he said, "you propose to make the honour and power of our Republic a mere perquisite of the rich." Instantly a wave of excitement swept the hall, but before the roar of Tammany's anger could discharge itself, DeWitt let go another shot, still more exasperating. "If we love the Republic, if we esteem the Jeffersonian principles upon which it was founded, we must show our independence of plutocracy, our freedom from the domination of the money power, and our sympathy with the toiling masses of the American people." Contrasting Flower with Chapin, he declared the former had no appreciation of the higher faculties of statesmanship, being hardly qualified to judge of them or to care about them in others. "I cannot understand," he continued, "why politicians should always be seeking the very offices for which nature has disqualified them. The jackass, when he got the lion's skin, did not thereby become a lion. The bray and length of ear soon betrayed his natural character."

In reply to several of Tammany's savage assaults, Isaac S. Catlin, also of Brooklyn, declared his endorsement of DeWitt's speech. "This is no time for candidates to be nominated for their money and for boodle campaigns," he said. "Let a man, not a barrel, represent us." Not since the historic bolt of John Kelly in 1879 had Democratic discord seemed so likely to result in another walkout; but the

roll-call immediately following showed how the adopted report of the Committee on Contested Seats had crushed opposition to Tammany's control. Of the 377 votes cast, Flower received 334. After this display of power it was apparent that the wild Hibernian outbreak preceding the vote meant nothing, since the Kings County delegation readily joined in the nomination by acclamation of William F. Sheehan and other candidates of the new machine.⁹

The platform omitted any distinct approval of the former President's well-known tariff views. On the question of the parity of gold and silver, which already deeply disturbed the party in the West and South, it said: "We are against the coinage of any dollar which is not of the intrinsic value of every other dollar of the United States. We therefore denounce the new Sherman silver law, under which one-tenth of our gold stock has been exported and all our silver output is dammed up at home, as a false pretence, an artful hindrance of return to free bimetallic coinage, and as tending only to produce a change from one kind of monometallism to another." As Cleveland had already openly declared for "sound money" in opposition to "the free and unlimited coinage of silver," this section became historic, since it favoured "bi-metallism," or the then existing policy of coining gold and silver. Thus it could be said that the New York Democracy was "sound on the money question."

During the campaign the tide seemed to be with the Republicans. Flower was as distinctively as John I. Hoffman in 1870 a Tammany candidate, and although personally an amiable, loyal friend, ready with his money and complacently disposed, distrust of his subserviency to the saloon, to the canal ring, and to Croker, aroused unexpected opposition. The exclusion of the Cleveland element from the

⁹ The following candidates were nominated: Governor, Roswell P. Flower, New York; Lt.-Gov. William F. Sheehan, Buffalo; Sec. of State, Frank Rice, Canandaigua; Atty.-General, Simon W. Rosendale, Albany; Comptroller, Frank Campbell, Bath; Treasurer, Elliott Danforth, Bainbridge; Engineer, Martin Schenck, Bath-on-the-Hudson.

State convention also tended to spread discord. It provoked an ever-ready disposition to judge "the trinity" caustically, and thus strengthened the habit of putting that judgment into the speech of the ablest and best known Democrats of the State. To a much less extent Lieutenant-Governor Jones' repudiation of the ticket in a plain, blunt letter added to the animosity. Although he had served the party for six years, the State convention totally ignored him. Undoubtedly his record was one of disappointment, if not of incompetence, but it stung his soldier friends that the long, verbose platform omitted to mention so much as his name.

The chief asset of the Republican campaign was Fassett, who grew rapidly in popularity. His telling arguments in favour of ballot reform; his exposure of the corruption that dominated the Hill administration; and the pictured hopelessness of reform legislation with Flower and Tammany in power, inspired his audiences. He had the power of lifting his hearers into an atmosphere in which right and wrong clearly appeared, and of making them hate evil with the intensity of crusaders. Nevertheless, he was to learn that argument is not always accepted strictly on its merits, and that there is a great deal in human nature besides right and wrong. Probably he erred in avoiding the tariff issue, which McKinley presented with such forcefulness and manifest approval in Ohio. Moreover, the Platt handicap burdened him. "Will Fassett, controlled by Platt, be better than Flower, controlled by Croker?" became a disturbing question. "Undoubtedly Platt's dictatorship is humiliating," answered George William Curtis, "but the evil at hand in the State is ballot corruption, and even assuming that the action of the Governor and the Legislature will be determined by Platt, yet Platt, knowing the disposition of his party and of the Democratic party, would be much more likely to favour such measures than either Governor Flower or Tammany Hall."¹⁰

Meanwhile the Democratic campaign gave evidence of en-

¹⁰ *Harper's Weekly*, September 26, 1891.

thusiasm. Wherever Flower appeared large audiences greeted him. He was not an orator, but his remarks were adequate. For entertainment, the burly self-confident Tammany orators, with their Celtic imaginations and hortatory gifts, supplied sufficient to keep audiences in an uproar. As usual, however, Governor Hill centred the stage. He played the game boldly, talked vividly, and gave an impression of power which enlisted the devoted service of men who believed in him. For seven years the party had followed his leadership, and although Murphy and Croker and Sheehan had crippled his control of caucuses and conventions, the average voters regarded him as indispensable in piloting the party to assured victory. It increased their confidence, too, that former President Cleveland travelled all the way from New York to Buffalo to vote the Democratic ticket. Not that the party needed his vote or desired his counsel. It had already turned its face against him, and many detractors had sprung into notice. But his most bitter enemies recognised that his name brought strength, because the people knew that graft, corruption, and dishonesty withered when they came within his touch.

At the close of election day, the plurality for Flower was 47,937, and Sheehan's 34,419.¹¹ The result was a sharp mortification to Sheehan, but not more so than to Fassett, whose vote fell eighteen per cent below Warner Miller's in 1888, while Flower's was only eight per cent less than Hill's. Various reasons were assigned. Some thought it the usual indifference exhibited in an off-year; others, that Flower had hired the rural voters to remain at home; others still, that the rank and file of Republicans in the up-state counties had wearied of Platt's domination, believing him at heart

¹¹ Democratic pluralities: Governor Flower, 47,937; Lt.-Gov. Sheehan, 34,419; Sec. of State Rice, 38,173; Comptroller Campbell, 45,306; Treasurer Danforth, 43,282; Atty.-Gen. Rosendale, 44,980; Engineer Schenck, 41,916. Fassett's plurality above the Harlem, 31,664. The Legislature, on the face of the returns, stood: Senate, 17 Reps., 14 Dems., 1 Independent Rep.; Assembly, 61 Reps., 67 Dems., Prohibition vote, 30,453.

opposed to civil service reform, to an adequate temperance law, and to any management of the party not on lines subserving his own control of affairs. Platt, however, side-stepped responsibility. "At first I strongly opposed Fassett's running," he says, "and sought to induce Andrew D. White, who was willing to stand. But . . . the young Republicans were almost solidly behind Fassett, and, though sceptical of the result, we nominated him. He made an aggressive, brilliant campaign."¹²

¹² *Autobiography*, p. 216.

CHAPTER XVIII

"THE THEFT OF A SENATOR"

1891

A REPUBLICAN SENATE had long fretted Governor Hill. It stood in his way like a Gibraltar. Besides refusing to confirm his appointees, it speeded investigations hurtful to his party, and barred the way to a reapportionment of the State for legislative purposes. To capture that citadel, therefore, Governor Hill, taking advantage of Flower's big campaign fund, had devoted his energies. From him nothing of the history or of the chances of senatorial candidates remained hidden; nor did such exhaustive knowledge ever combine with a more concentrated passion. When the contest closed, the Senate, on the face of the returns, had seventeen Republicans, fourteen Democrats, and one Independent;¹ but surprises and trouble began at once to develop in three districts. In the Twenty-seventh (Allegany, Che-mung and Steuben) the Republican candidate held the office of park commissioner at Hornellsville. Under the law, this made him ineligible.² That the local party leaders knew before the election of this impediment added to a State-wide indignation. It reduced the Republican senators to sixteen, but did not add to the Democratic column.

To the further consternation of Republicans it appeared that in the Twenty-fifth (Cortland and Onondaga) several precincts in Onondaga had received and used official ballots designated on the back of each for use at other polls, which

¹ James T. Edwards of Allegany, elected by Democrats and anti-Platt Republicans in opposition to Commodore P. Vedder, Republican.

² "No person shall be eligible to the legislature, who, at the time of his election, is, or within one hundred days previous thereto has been . . . an officer under any city government."

the law of 1890 as amended in 1891 invalidated. Accordingly a Democratic board of supervisors threw out 1,252 of such ballots, which elected the Democratic candidate by 906 plurality. When the county clerk, a Republican, refused to certify their action, Governor Hill promptly removed him, and appointed one of his own party. The opinion obtained among Republicans that the wrong distribution of the ballots was intentional, and for several weeks, amidst great excitement, an array of lawyers of State-wide repute, including Joseph H. Choate of New York City, contested every step. In the course of the legal proceedings one of the Democratic supervisors fell into contempt, the Court sentencing him to jail for thirty days and to pay a fine of \$250. A stay on appeal being denied, the Governor, advised of the conviction by wire, quickly sent a pardon by special messenger. In the end the Court of Appeals decided in favour of the Democratic candidate, holding that the law invalidated ballots if used at polls other than those designated on the backs of such ballots.³ The evidence did not positively prove intentional wrong distribution, although Judge Ruger of the Court declared such inference inescapable. This decision gave each party fifteen Senators with one Independent.

At the same time a more serious and sensational case developed in the Fifteenth (Columbia, Dutchess and Putnam), where a Democratic board of supervisors, apparently without the slightest regard for accuracy, arbitrarily declared the Democratic candidate elected. Upon the refusal of the county clerk, a Republican, to certify its action, it appointed John J. Mylod its secretary, who signed the return, while the Governor, promptly removing the clerk, appointed Storm Emans, who certified the so-called "Mylod return" and forwarded copies as the law provided to the Governor, the Secretary of State, and to the Comptroller. Thereupon Judge Barnard, to whom the Republicans applied, issued an order compelling the supervisors to make a corrected return,

³ Court of Appeals, Vol. 129, p. 325.

which showed the election of Deane, the Republican candidate. As Emans failed to forward this "corrected return" to the State officials, Judge Cullen of the Supreme Court, a Democrat, ordered him to do so. He complied, mailing the three copies about seven o'clock in the evening. On the same day Judge Ingraham, on the application of the Democrats, granted a stay of Cullen's order, which Emans received at midnight. Immediately Emans hurried to Albany (leaving Poughkeepsie at 3 a.m.) and early in the morning called on Governor Hill at the Executive Mansion, who sent him to Isaac H. Maynard, then deputy attorney-general and acting counsel for the Board of State Canvassers, composed of the Secretary, Treasurer, and Comptroller of State. With his help Emans recovered the "corrected return," which left the State Board with only the "Mylod return."

Subsequently Judge Cullen had Emans arrested for contempt, the testimony disclosing that the Secretary of State gave him the corrected return, although he exhibited no legal authority to warrant its surrender; that Maynard took it from the Comptroller's desk, explaining that it was misdirected; and that Emans secured Governor Hill's copy from a small boy in the Executive office.

By agreement the representatives of both political parties submitted the questions involved in the three districts to the Court of Appeals, and on December 29, 1891, the day the State Board of Canvassers took its final action, the Court handed down its decisions, holding the 1,252 votes in the twenty-fifth or Onondaga district invalidated; that the Republican candidate in the twenty-seventh or Steuben district was ineligible; and forbade the consideration of the "Mylod return" in favour of the Democratic candidate in the fifteenth or Dutchess district. Nevertheless, the State Board of Canvassers, in the presence of Maynard, promptly overruled the Court, counted the "Mylod return" and issued a certificate to the Democratic candidate in the Dutchess district. No necessity existed for committing the illegal act, since Deane's death after the election left the Republi-

cans only fourteen Senators and the Democrats fifteen, with the one Independent. Moreover, little fear existed of having Republicans fill the vacancies created in the fifteenth and twenty-seventh districts, for Governor Hill controlled the call for special elections. Nevertheless, after seven years of struggle to capture the Senate, the Democratic leaders proposed to take no chances, and though it took pressure to bring the whole State Board into line, the whip did it. Contempt proceedings followed, and on December 21, 1894, the Court of Appeals pronounced the Board "guilty" and fined it \$831.98.

This "theft of a senator," as it was called, created a most profound sensation. "There was in law and in fact," said Judge Cullen, "a complete transmission of the Dutchess County corrected returns to the officers prescribed by statute. The returns were not before the Board of State Canvassers, not because of any defect in the transmission, but because by the action of the Secretary of State, the Governor and the Counsellor (Maynard) of the Comptroller, the returns were taken from the several public offices where they had been properly received, and were given to Emans. . . . No imposition was practised upon any of the officers as to the contents of these documents, since the officers were entirely aware of the character of the papers delivered up."

In reviewing what was called "a scandalous robbery of the public records," a committee of the State Bar Association⁴ reported: "That from December 7, the date of the corrected return, to December 29, the day the State Board of Canvassers acted, counsel for the Republican senator-elect persistently endeavoured to have the corrected returns forwarded to Albany and counted, while Judge Maynard and those with whom he acted were persistently endeavouring to prevent the returns from reaching the State Board. The machinery of the law was continuously used to prevent the

⁴ This committee was composed of 7 Democrats and 2 Republicans, among them being James C. Carter, William B. Hornblower and Elihu Root.

counting of the corrected returns, and when that machinery proved insufficient Judge Maynard, while deputy attorney-general, deliberately took part in the removal of those returns."

In a letter of explanation Maynard justified taking the corrected returns because the attorneys in the matter stipulated that the proceeding should be suspended until the decision of the Court of Appeals, and that the Board of State Canvassers should complete the count upon the basis of such returns as were then before it, no corrected statement, in any of the disputed cases, to be sent to or received by the State Board. To this the State Bar Committee replied that Joseph H. Choate of opposing counsel not only denied that any such intention was in their minds, but that the conduct of both parties was totally at variance with any such interpretation, since they had determined their plan of procedure and had carried it into effect before making the stipulation. Moreover, the stipulation by its express language, which became a part of the Court's order, specified that the State Board of Canvassers might "consider such return from the County of Dutchess as may hereafter be filed. It is inconceivable, therefore," continued the Committee, "that it should have been the design of any of the parties to the stipulation to arrest a proceeding which had for its object a correction of the Dutchess County statement, when that proceeding, the essential feature of the plan, was in actual progress at the time of making the stipulation, and was recognised by an order entered by consent simultaneously with the making of the stipulation, which contained no allusion to the arresting of such proceedings."

As a further ground of defence, and the one relied upon by Governor Hill, Maynard claimed that Emans, at the time he deposited the amended statement in the mail, was under the restraining order of Judge Ingraham, issued on December 21; but the record showed that the order, wholly unknown to Emans, was not served upon him until several hours after he had mailed the corrected returns. How then

could he have "mistakenly mailed them?"⁵ Moreover, "Judge Ingraham's order," said Judge Cullen, "did not require Emans to take affirmative action to undo what he had done, or justify him in taking such action." In this opinion Judge Ingraham concurred. But if the Ingraham stay had been valid, said the Bar Committee, it did not justify Maynard's removal of the returns. "His act was without any warrant or justification, . . . and although his offence is one of the gravest known to the law . . . he has made proclamation that his decision to remove those returns was made with full knowledge of the entire situation; that he took time for full deliberation, and that now after mature consideration he accepts the full responsibility for his action."⁶

Very soon after the commission of this offence, Governor Flower appointed Isaac H. Maynard a judge of the Court of Appeals.⁷ His abstraction of the public records had already aroused widespread indignation, but the action of the Governor, in thus rewarding the chief actor in the wicked conspiracy, sent a shock through the people of the State. A majority of the Senate, however, promptly confirmed him. Acting in violation of all precedent, it also seated the Democratic candidate in the Twenty-fifth or Steuben district, and immediately authorised a mid-winter enumeration or census that formed the basis for a reapportionment bill, which gave the Democrats sixty-five assembly and nineteen senatorial districts. Monroe County with 181,000 population received three assemblymen and Albany County, with 146,000, obtained four. Seven Democratic counties with 574,000 voters were assigned seventeen senators, while the balance of the State, with 749,000 voters, received fifteen. Although the character of the bill exploited the objectionable system of representation by localities and geographical boundaries

⁵ Alton B. Parker, *Eulogy of Gov. Hill*, p. 20.

⁶ Dated March 22, 1892. Republished *New York Tribune*, October 7, 1893.

⁷ In place of Robert Earl, appointed Chief Judge.

against which the Governor had declaimed in every campaign for seven years, the majority of the Senate, in its haste to act, not only disallowed debate, but without authority of law or of the rules suspended Senators Saxton, Erwin, and O'Connor, who, for want of time to examine the bill, had refused to vote. In its zeal the majority proposed sending them to jail, and would probably have done so had not Hill, then in Washington as a qualified senator, become alarmed by the lurid press reports and ordered otherwise.

Determined to secure their future control in the State, the Democratic leaders of the Legislature also substituted appointive boards of election inspectors in New York City for the bi-partisan boards which had previously acted as a check upon Croker's power to create any majority needed to carry the State.⁸ Thus entrenched the Democratic State Committee turned its attention to a candidate for President.

⁸ In counties outside of New York county election inspectors were chosen in each district by the voters, the majority so elected determining the board's party character.

CHAPTER XIX

HILL'S SNAP-CONVENTION

1892

UPON the completion of his term as President on March 4, 1889, Grover Cleveland resumed the practice of law in New York City, and for a time seemed to dismiss all desire of returning to public life. But in the following December he addressed the Merchants Association of Boston with such fidelity to his well-known economic principles that it at once awakened renewed interest, and for the next two years his speeches appeared in the daily press of the country with more and more frequency. It was not then generally known that these addresses, most painstakingly prepared, were put into type and copies carefully distributed to the press in advance of their delivery. "This movement for promoting a third nomination," says George F. Parker, "was nursed in the office of an obscure weekly newspaper in lower Broadway. There was no organisation, no plan, no money, and yet, somehow, it began to take form, though not from any open approval of Mr. Cleveland except by that silence which is said to give consent. . . . But if it had no important centre and no head, it had a popular following over the country."¹

After his address at the banquet of the New York Reform Club in December, 1890, the question of Cleveland's candidacy began "to take shape," continues Parker, "through correspondence with one or more trusted persons in every State, although except in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts there was a conspicuous absence of men close to the party machine."² As the scope of the propaganda broadened,

¹ Parker, *Recollections of Cleveland*, pp. 132-135.

² *Ibid.*

Cleveland's speeches touched more and more upon topics involving matters of party policy. This naturally intensified the interest in his candidacy, and, as might have been expected, a demand came early in 1891 for an expression of his views upon the free-coinage of silver. It was already a delicate question. While the East generally opposed it, the sentiment in its favour in the South and West rapidly strengthened. Some of his confidential friends, occasionally called into council, stoutly opposed meddling with it. William C. Whitney, who enjoyed his confidence in the highest degree, although in perfect accord in principle, believed any expression upon the subject premature and impolitic, declaring with unusual emphasis that it would be fatal to his success in 1892. Nevertheless, the former President desired the country should know where he stood, and with characteristic boldness he wrote his famous letter of February 10, 1891, condemning "the dangerous and reckless experiment of free, unlimited and independent silver coinage." The criticism that followed, especially in the West and on the Pacific Coast, seemed to justify Whitney's fear. The letter, however, found enthusiastic support in the East, while other addresses, increasing in interest and receiving wider publicity, not only revealed integrity and political consistency, but gradually fixed Cleveland in the public mind as the most available candidate.

In the meantime leading Democratic senators from several States, supported by able journalists, had fixed upon Senator Hill as the strongest solidifying influence. They were not blind to the increasing popular interest in Cleveland. His frequent speeches, charged with courage, simplicity, and honesty, had greatly disturbed them, and they awaited an early opportunity of presenting Hill formally as New York's candidate for President. As soon, therefore, as the Democratic National Committee issued its call for a National Convention to be held in Chicago on June 21, 1892, the Democratic State Committee called a State Convention to assemble at Albany on February 22 for the purpose of

choosing delegates-at-large. The selection of this unusually early date, which titled it "The snap convention," quickly aroused State-wide criticism. It seemed to blow the embers of loyalty to Cleveland, lying imbedded in the hearts of his friends, into a great blaze, illuminating the situation and stirring them into activity. It was a call to arms! "An enforced mid-winter expression for Senator Hill in this State," said the Brooklyn *Eagle*, "will enable his opponents in other States to point to the compulsory, premature, and artificial methods employed to secure it. If anything could make other States of the Union override New York in the National Convention, it would be this manifest endeavour to override the preference or anticipatively warp the action of other States." The Albany *Argus*, far from being unfriendly to Hill, pointed out that "A State Convention in February or March would be recognised by all as evidence of an attempt to forestall the sentiment of the party, and force some obnoxious programme on Democratic voters; and as no such programme for at least twenty years has ever been contemplated, no State convention has ever been called in those months." Other Democratic journals, notably the New York *World*, the Utica *Observer*, the Syracuse *Courier* and the Buffalo *Courier*, voiced similar protests. Early in February the *World*, in an editorial addressed to Senator Hill, warned him "not to force a mid-winter convention, or to underestimate the force of public opinion, or to overlook forty-three other States while seizing his own."

For the purpose of making an organised protest, Charles S. Fairchild, William R. Grace, former mayor of New York, and other representatives of the Cleveland wing of the party, called a State meeting for February 11. Fairchild had rendered conspicuous service as attorney-general in prosecuting the beneficiaries of the canal frauds unearthed by Governor Tilden (1875), and although not generally known to the country in 1887 when appointed to succeed Manning as secretary of the treasury, he soon disclosed the art of combining careful preparation and tactful effort in execut-

ing his Chief's views. Men found him amiable, but a crisp pen could inflict a bitter wound in a brief sentence. It was evident that Cleveland knew his man, and in this critical hour of the former President's contest for a renomination, he loomed large as a quiet, determined crusader. He turned every attendant of the meeting of February 11 into a worker, and when that assembly adjourned, after a session memorable for its earnestness and definiteness of purpose, a petition of several thousand Democratic voters endorsed its action, proving the extent of the hostility entertained for the snap-convention, if not for its candidate.

There is some evidence that Hill preferred a later convention. But the mirage effects of an atmosphere surcharged with ambition is likely to misinterpret both public and party sentiment, and the State Committee, if not Hill himself, acted on the assumption that opponents of an early convention had their own snap methods in mind. That no convention in the past twenty years had been held in New York for the selection of Presidential delegates earlier than the 20th of April was to the State Committee immaterial. It admitted that the independent movement and its monster meeting of February 11th, which Hill tried hard to prevent, had fixed the country's attention upon a divisive "mugwump sentiment," and that other attempts to create a reaction might be made. But it believed that if New York spoke before any other Commonwealth expressed its preference, it would disclose Cleveland's weakness and Hill's strength. Besides, an instructed delegation would encourage friends in other States to do likewise. This at least was its hope, and so at the appointed time the Murphy-Crocker-Sheehan machine held its State convention, refusing to hear the protestants from the Fairchild meeting and instructing its selected delegation for Hill. Then, as if distrustful of its own folks, it fettered them with the unit rule.³

While the Snappers were thus slamming the door in Cleve-

³ Delegates-at-large, Roswell P. Flower, Edward Murphy, Daniel E. Sickles, Henry W. Slocum.

land's face, the former President, by previous arrangement, was delivering an address to the students of the University of Michigan, so that the people of the country, when reading of Hill's snap-victory, had the opportunity of comparing its sentiments with Cleveland's creed.⁴ In speaking of moral sentiment, of personal honour, and private integrity, the former President said: "Interest yourselves in public affairs as a duty of citizenship, but do not surrender your faith to those who discredit and debase politics by scoffing at sentiment and principle, and whose political activity consists in attempts to gain popular support by cunning devices and shrewd manipulation." The possible purport of his words instantly struck every listener, the students jumping to their feet and breaking into yells, in which the whole audience joined.

Yet it looked for the moment as if Hill had obtained an advantage. To many in the silver States, where Cleveland's uncompromising attitude toward free-coinage necessarily weakened him, it seemed to settle New York's choice of a candidate. Prominent Democrats representing other sections of the country indicated a similar judgment. Henry Watterson said, editorially: "Mr. Cleveland is no longer a possibility. His selection, if such a thing were under the circumstances conceivable, would be an act of deliberate suicide. The Democrats of the Union should meet the act of the New York Democracy in setting Mr. Cleveland aside and advancing Mr. Hill to the party leadership."⁵ Yet New York's action had its seamy side. The Gulf States, which had received the former President with much enthusiasm during his recent winter visit, disliked the convention's snap character. Many in the West resented it as a threat. It seemed to say "if you would carry the pivotal State you must take Hill." Nor did it escape attention that other States neither called early conventions, nor, when held, instructed for Hill.

⁴ See *Sentiment in our National Life*, Cleveland's collected addresses.

⁵ *Courier-Journal*, February 23, 1892.

Meanwhile, an organisation, known as the "Anti-snappers," thoroughly aroused the State of New York. Every county engaged in the movement; money came without difficulty; attractive speakers held enthusiastic meetings; and a State convention, called to select a contesting delegation, filled Syracuse on June 1 with a great multitude. Franklin D. Locke, a leader in the movement, took a thousand men from Buffalo. It relied upon the pressure of sentiment rather than the presence of an opposing delegation at Chicago, and in its desire to show that an army of Democrats opposed Tammany's snap methods and candidate, it omitted nothing in the way of enthusiastic overflow meetings and caustic denunciation. When it adjourned leading Democrats in other States, alarmed at the strength of the opposition, which seemed to jeopardise success in New York if either Hill or Cleveland was selected, advised the nomination of some one outside the State. Even Watterson modified his position. "If we go there for a nominee, we shall walk through a slaughter-house into an open grave."⁶

The arrival of the opposing delegations at Chicago (June 21) emphasised Watterson's warning. Edward Murphy, chairman of the Democratic State Committee, in an open letter, credited to Senator Hill, declared in substance: "The Democrats of New York do not know that their State would be for Cleveland if Hill were not a candidate. Their opposition is based upon an idea, a sentiment, which has become as fixed and absolute as a principle. The idea is dislike of the Mugwump, whether he be a Republican like some of the editors in New York, or a Democrat like Ex-Secretary Fairchild or Ex-Mayor Grace. The Democrats dislike them all with a bitterness far exceeding any possible ill-will which they will entertain towards their Republican opponents. In 1885 the *New York Times* and *Evening Post* bolted Governor Hill and ever since have assaulted him. In 1890 they joined with Platt against Tammany. In 1891 we threw out the County Democracy which was their nest, and although they

⁶ *Courier-Journal*, June 12, 1892.

turned their batteries on Lieutenant-Governor Sheehan, he beat them 35,000. The nomination of Cleveland means the resurrection of this crowd and the destruction of the regular organisation. It would be impossible for Governor Hill to bring the rank and file into line for Cleveland, for to them it would be putting these 'Constitutional Democrats' into power and over those who have contributed so much to the success of the Democratic party. By his acquiescence in the action of the Mugwump convention, Cleveland proves that he is willing to go to the country as the representative of a body of bolters, and no work can convince the rank and file that they should support such a candidate."

To this statement Fairchild replied that "Constitutional Democrats" have brought victory to the Democracy of New York. Some of them "worked for the election of Mayor Grant in 1890, and in 1891 all supported Flower for governor." He pronounced the Murphy manifesto "a good omen, since it did not compare in violence to John Kelly's broadside against Tilden in 1876, or to that against Cleveland in 1884, and yet both carried New York. No such manifestoes appeared in years when Democrats were defeated." Of Governor Hill's strength, he said: "In 1885 he received the support of a large number of Republicans angered over the defeat of Blaine. In 1888 the threat of Warner Miller's platform alarmed the liquor interests, and they supported Hill for governor as the most efficient means to protect their business. They voted without regard to the personality of Cleveland or Hill." Replying to Murphy's reference to bolting, "it recalls that Hill advised a bolt in Oswego this spring and thereby aided the Republicans in electing a mayor. He also advised a bolt in New York City and thus lost the election of a Democrat. In these spring elections the Democrats suffered a net loss of one hundred and thirty-one supervisors, the Democratic papers in the interior of the State ascribing these reverses to 'an anti-Hill tidal-wave.'"

These statements revealed the bitterness of the home feeling, and confirmed the belief which already permeated the

convention, that the loss of New York must inevitably follow the selection of either one of its candidates. Accepting this condition other candidates became more determined. Senator Brice of Ohio redoubled his activities in the interest of Senator Gorman of Maryland; former Governor Gray of Indiana became noticeably aggressive; and Governor Boies of Iowa, a native and for forty years a resident of New York, coquetted with both factions. To prevent a nomination on the first ballot, they pooled their strength and made New York's headquarters a common meeting-place.

Meanwhile the leader of the hour, William C. Whitney, marshalled the Cleveland battalions. Although occasionally insolent with a tendency to domineer, men took genuine pleasure in conferring with him. Beneath a stern look he had depths of emotion and nervous sensibility, with a gentle, sympathetic manner. And leaders left him with confidence in his judgment. Calvin Brice, admittedly the wittiest and cleverest member of the Senate, was a fascinating "rainbow chaser," radiating charm without inspiring trust. Gorman, though reading the undercurrents of public opinion and indicating flashes of political genius, betrayed insincerity and provoked distrust. Whitney possessed a more picturesque personality. He was undoubtedly a master at political wire-pulling and intrigue. Hill believed he would betray any man who stood in his way. But he had vision, amazing intuition, a receptive, alert mind, and an almost uncanny aptitude for assimilation. Moreover, he had the rare gift of doing things quickly. "He could accomplish more in one day," said Cleveland, "than any other man I ever saw could do in ten. Every power of his mind would be concentrated upon the present duty. Social life, personal, business—all were sacrificed, so that he would be fully ready. I have never known anything approaching this power of absorption, and I have always been thrown with lawyers who developed this capacity in a striking way." ⁷

⁷ Parker, *Recollections of Cleveland*, p. 91.

Before leaving New York, Whitney, counselling secretly with twelve delegates, leaders in as many different States, had selected committees on credentials, resolutions, and organisation, and picked a temporary chairman. In Chicago he mingled familiarly with visiting delegations, but in a room in the rear of a spacious parlor, over the door of which blazed the word "Cleveland" in the form of an incandescent arch, this master manager disclosed his exceptional gifts.⁸ He tactfully opened the way for the Syracuse delegation to withdraw its notice of contest; talked Richard Croker into an attitude of benevolent neutrality; won a notable concession from Brice; cultivated most friendly relations with Gorman; impressed upon Indianians the advantage of interpreting their ambiguous instructions in favour of unity of action; destroyed the efforts of the Montana delegation to solidify the so-called Silver-States; and gathered about him the leaders of wavering delegations from distant States, upon whose steadfastness the nomination of the former President largely depended. To them the candidate that could be elected was of more importance than his name, and Whitney's energising influence transformed them into a solid Cleveland phalanx.⁹ If his mandates did not always please the anti-snappers, his inflexibility found backing in a diplomatic letter from Cleveland. Delegates could hardly believe their own eyes as they saw him lounging in the rooms of the opposition, or silently and calmly adjusting his eyeglasses as the convention hall resounded with invective and the violence of personal detestation.

To supplement Whitney's work there daily appeared in the Chicago press an editorial copied from the *New York World*, which dampened the ardour of the Hill supporters.

⁸ Whitney was supported by a famous galaxy of well-known New Yorkers, among them D. Cady Herrick, in charge of the headquarters, Wilson S. Bissell, Franklin D. Locke, E. Ellery Anderson, William R. Grace, Robert A. Maxwell, Charles S. Fairchilds, and Oscar S. Straus.

⁹ Whitney said: "I can't keep votes back. They tumble in at the windows as well as at the doors." *Peck*, p. 291.

On June 22 it said: "We are disappointed in Senator Hill. We supposed he was a Democrat. We hoped he was equal to a great opportunity. It is neither heroic nor Democratic to proclaim 'no surrender.' That will do for barbarous warfare or for opera bouffe, but it is not good, sensible politics. In a true Democracy the majority rules without oppression and the minority submits without disgrace. We supposed David B. Hill possessed too much sense and sagacity to take the attitude of dying in the last ditch 'with colours flying.' Where did he learn such Democracy? Is there something poisonous in the atmosphere of Washington?" On the same day came a more bitter sting. "It is creditable to the Democracy and to the good sense of the Tammany delegates that they are restive in the absurd position into which the selfishness, the egotism, and the blind obstinacy of some of its members have forced the delegation. . . . It behooves Mr. Murphy and Mr. Sheehan to moderate their unreasonable and undemocratic position. And it is incumbent upon Governor Flower to put the curb-bit upon the wild asses' colts that are striving to kick over the traces because the rest of the United States do not yield to their ideas about the nomination. Mr. Croker has refused to join any fool action. New York must not become a laughing stock and a stumbling block."

In reply to this reference to Croker, which provoked wide attention, the Tammany Boss simply said: "Tammany is for Hill." But he carefully avoided the prophecy that Cleveland could not carry New York. It became evident, too, that neither the New York nor Kings County delegations continued to strain themselves to nominate the Senator. Indeed, the Hill office-holders in the interior of the State, backed by Murphy and Sheehan, seemed to be his only zealous supporters. As already stated, the hope of the anti-Cleveland forces was based upon their ability to prevent a choice on the first ballot. But at a critical moment in the contest, Gorman, without assigning any reason, quit fighting and practically closed his headquarters. This unexpected

and unaccountable movement naturally demoralised the opposition.

Nevertheless, the delegates kept up appearances. When Governor Abbott of New Jersey, in presenting the name of Cleveland, courteously mentioned Hill, the galleries rose as the New Yorkers leaped upon chairs and continued to cheer for twenty minutes. Nor did William C. DeWitt of Brooklyn, who presented the Senator, speak with a curb-bit. "A leader," he said, "who holds that corporations created by State or Nation are not amenable to the control of their creator, or who fails to sympathise with at least an international effort to enlarge the currency of the world in the interest of productive industry, or who makes his friends and counsellors among the plutocrats of the land, lacks the qualities indispensable to a triumphant standard bearer of our unterrified constituency. Our people want a leader filled with the instincts, aspirations, shrewdness, sagacity, hopes, fears, joys and sorrows which crowd their struggle for life and happiness. The contesting delegation has been dismissed from our doors, and now you are asked, not merely to defeat the choice of our State for the nomination, but to force upon us a candidate from our own home, hostile to our organisation. Such is not the measure of courtesy and friendship which we of New York should think due, under like circumstances, to the representatives of a sister State. That consideration for the rights and sentiments of others which is the source of all gentility is indispensable to the nobility of this body. Ours is the coigne of vantage, the point of strategy, the very spot of victory or defeat. We appreciate the responsibility of our position, and would speak to you like men whose blood flows in their words. The common enemy is strongly entrenched in the Capitol. You are the generals of the army of invasion in grand council assembled. We hail from Waterloo; and we fearlessly proclaim that Hill is the Blücher who can drive the Republican chieftain to St. Helena in November!"

The roll-call began at 3 o'clock in the morning (June 23)

and when it reached New York Hill had received only nineteen votes. "It is a funeral," declared John R. Fellows. "We are warned to keep to ourselves what we do not believe." At the conclusion of the call Cleveland had 616, or ten more than the necessary two-thirds; Hill, 112; Boies, 105; Gorman, 15; scattering, 43. Of the seventy-seven votes from the so-called Silver States and Territories, Cleveland had 48, Hill 4, Boies 25.¹⁰

A humorous version of the night's proceedings appeared editorially in the New York *Tribune*: "William C. Whitney, though not much advertised as such, was there in the capacity of a Tiger Tamer. Several days were occupied with devices for exasperating the animal. The Chicago newspapers made fun of him and stuck pins into him, and the mercantile community of that town put up prices on his victuals and drink. People in the show gazed on him, and a lot of anti-snappers, so-called, pelted him with paper and spitballs. Then Mr. Bourke Cockran told the audience how smooth and velvety he was if only he was well fed and stroked the right way, but what a fearful temper and destructive maw he had if roused by opposition. In his most impressive manner he said he would not care to be responsible for the consequences if the animal got roused. Along toward morning, in the midst of a terrific thunderstorm, when everybody's feelings had been worked up to the highest pitch, they let the Animal out, and Whitney, with very little exertion, harnessed him, put a bridle on him, hitched him to a band-wagon, and drove him round as if he was only an ordinary working mule."¹¹

Upon the convention reassembling in the afternoon, several candidates for Vice-President were presented, but Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois, former assistant postmaster general,

¹⁰ Hill's votes came from the following States: Alabama, 2; Colorado, 3; Georgia, 5; Louisiana, 1; Maine, 1; Massachusetts, 4; Mississippi, 3; New York, 72; Ohio, 6; Virginia, 11; West Virginia, 3; New Mexico, 1.

¹¹ January 12, 1893.

far outran former Governor Gray of Indiana, ending with his unanimous nomination.

Meanwhile, the platform makers encountered a choppy sea. The convention approved the improvement of the great waterways; the construction of the Nicaragua canal; the admission of New Mexico and Arizona as States; and a stinging condemnation of the proposed Federal Election Bill. It also included former utterances respecting sumptuary legislation, civil service reform, labour laws, trusts, and foreign affairs. Of the coinage of silver, it said: "We hold to the use of both gold and silver as the standard money of the country, and to the coinage of both gold and silver without discrimination against either metal, but the dollar, the mint of coinage of both metals, must be of equal intrinsic and exchangeable value or be adjusted through international agreement, or by such safeguards of legislation as shall insure the maintenance of the parity of the two metals, and the equal power of every dollar at all times in the markets and in the payment of debts; and we demand that all paper currency shall be kept at par with and redeemable in such coin." An effort in open convention to insert the word "free," making it "Free coinage of both gold and silver," was lost without a roll-call.

The tariff-plank prepared by the Cleveland managers, which closely followed the tariff-reform views of the former President's message of 1887, did not fare so well. Under the leadership of Henry Watterson the convention, amidst great excitement, adopted, 564 to 342, the following substitute: "We denounce Republican protection as a fraud, a robbery of the great majority of the American people for the benefit of the few. We declare it to be a fundamental principle of the Democratic party that the Federal Government has no constitutional power to impose and collect tariff duties except for the purposes of revenue only. . . . We denounce the McKinley tariff law as the culminating atrocity of class legislation . . . and we promise its repeal as one of the beneficent results that will follow the action of the

people in entrusting power to the Democratic party." Writing some years later of his great victory, Watterson said: "I had become the embodiment of my own epigram, 'a tariff for revenue only.' Mr. Cleveland, in the beginning very much taken with it, had grown first lukewarm and then frightened. His Free Trade message of 1887 had been regarded by the party as an answering voice. But I knew better. In the national platform, over the protest of Whitney, his organiser, and Vilas, his spokesman, I had forced him to stand on that gospel. He flew into a rage and threatened to modify if not to repudiate the plank in his letter of acceptance. The correspondence and quarrel which followed ended my personal relations with Mr. Cleveland. Thereafter we did not speak as we passed by."¹² John Hay wrote Reid: "I think Chicago did the best it could for you. The free trade plank is worth thousands of votes to us, and the nomination of Stevenson is 'butter on your sassage.'"¹³

¹² Watterson, *Marse Henry*, Vol. 2, pp. 133-4, 143-4.

¹³ Cortissoz's *Life of Reid*, Vol. 2, p. 181.

CHAPTER XX

CLEVELAND DEFEATS HARRISON

1892

THE loss of the State Senate deeply distressed the Republicans. Their own blunder, causing the loss of the Hornellsville candidate, deepened their humiliation as the Hill managers buttressed their control by reapportionment of the State. Yet no one heard a cry of despair. The spring elections (1892) which Fairchild had pronounced "an anti-Hill landslide," brought encouragement, while the spirit disclosed at the Republican State Convention that met at Albany on April 29 to select delegates-at-large to the National Convention at Minneapolis (June 7) showed a clear perception of events and a readiness to face them. The renomination of President Harrison constituted the only topic of conversation, and although much opposition developed, due to Platt's disaffection, not the faintest trace of discord existed as to principles or purposes. The platform commended the Harrison administration; recognised the patriotic services of Secretary Blaine; and reaffirmed the party's position on the tariff, on the parity of gold and silver, and on the rights of the black voter. It caustically condemned the recognised leaders of the Democratic party as guilty of an inimical conspiracy that involved the falsification of election returns, and the theft of public records, which culminated in the reversal of the political majority of the Legislature as determined at the polls by the vote of the people. It also denounced the Legislature "thus feloniously constituted" for its removal of wholesome restrictions upon the liquor traffic; for its failure to keep its anti-election pledges in behalf of ballot and tax reforms; for its white-washing report of a guilty judge of the Court of

Appeals; and for its fraudulent mid-winter Enumeration Act, which, after diminishing the population of the rural districts and enormously increasing that of the cities, became the basis of a Legislative apportionment which deprived Republican counties of a fair representation and gave Democratic strongholds an unwarranted allotment. "While these crimes were plotted and perpetrated by David B. Hill and his fellow conspirators," continued the document, "the Democratic party, except the individuals who refused to sanction the revolutionary measures, has made itself full partakers of the fruits of a fraud-made majority in the Legislature, including the theft of the Dutchess County returns and the appointment of Isaac H. Maynard to the Court of Appeals."

In its selection of delegates-at-large, the Convention betrayed no factionalism. By common consent the party recognised Senator Hiscock, Chauncey M. Depew, Warner Miller, and Thomas C. Platt, and without reference to their Presidential preferences, the seven hundred and seventy-seven delegates accepted them. Nevertheless, sharp differences existed. Platt still resented his exclusion from the Cabinet, and although the President usually gratified his wishes as to appointments, it chafed him to receive them through Senator Hiscock. To one so sensitive these patronage crumbs seemed like Pyrrhic victories, and the re-election of President Harrison must further handicap, if not prevent, his control. For eight consecutive years the party had suffered defeat, and in the election of 1891 the rank and file had plainly indicated their weariness. To rehabilitate himself, therefore, Platt saw the need of a change in the Presidency, and with Senator Quay of Pennsylvania, and other anti-Administration leaders, he advocated James G. Blaine. He admitted that Harrison had made "a good, strong, wise President," and he enthusiastically praised the policy of his Administration.¹ Nevertheless, he credited Blaine with being the chief factor in the settlement of the Samoan, Chilean, and other diplo-

¹ *New York Tribune*, June 2, 1892.

matic achievements, and expressed the belief that although Blaine's letter of February 6 had advised the Chairman of the National Committee that he was not a candidate and that his name would not be presented to the convention, his nomination would result in certain victory.

Depew took Blaine's letter as sincere. "I have been his friend against Hayes, Grant, and Garfield," he declared, "and if there had been any intention on his part of becoming a candidate I was entitled to notice, would have received it, and would go to Minneapolis to nominate him." "Moreover," he continued, "whoever runs for President on the Republican ticket will succeed or fail upon the record of the Harrison Administration. One man may stand for reciprocity and diplomacy, and another for the Behring Sea, the Samoan arbitration, the Chilean affair, or for the interesting conference on bimetallism; but there is only one man who, by the office he holds and the masterly way in which he has administered it, stands for all. General Harrison is the only man who, as a Republican, has carried New York on State or National ticket since Garfield, and he can carry it again, though the new Election Law gives some additional advantage to the Democrats."²

Senator Hiscock also stood for the President. Indeed, the division in New York was in no wise obscure. Former Stalwarts generally followed Platt, while Robertson, Husted, and many other former Half-Breeds alligned themselves with Hiscock and Depew, the latter accepting an invitation to present the President's name to the convention. Indeed, the energy of Harrison's New York managers took the form of a local contest to sidetrack Platt. Of the conspicuous leaders only Warner Miller showed indecision.

The anti-Administration leaders, apparently undisturbed by Blaine's letters, based their assurances of his action upon a feeling of resentment which they believed the Secretary entertained toward the President, and which they hoped to fan into an open break. Some ground undoubtedly existed

² *New York Tribune*, June 2, 1892.

for their surmise. It was no secret that during the first months of the Administration, Blaine acknowledged some disappointment. He assumed he had entered the Harrison cabinet as he did that of Garfield, his prominence as a party leader entitling him to larger recognition, and he had expected very naturally to share in shaping its policy and controlling its affairs. He hoped to be consulted in the formation of the cabinet, suggesting as much in a letter to General Harrison, and expressing to friends some surprise that he was kept in ignorance.

After Harrison's inauguration he found that upon matters outside the State Department his advice was sought with no more freedom or frequency than that of other cabinet officials. He discovered, too, that the President could say "no" and stick to it; that he could write dispatches with the vigour and felicity of a trained diplomat; that social functions in nowise conflicted with his patient mastery of public questions; and that he did not need and would not have a Premier to guide and act for him. The President's failure to name Walker Blaine as an assistant to his father undoubtedly grieved the Secretary, although his accomplished son soon became solicitor of the Department upon the President's own initiative.

Had the Secretary known the President at the outset as he did General Garfield, he must have anticipated such independence of action. But it did not apparently mar their personal relations. "When Chase comes to see me, I feel awkward and he seems constrained," said President Lincoln of his Secretary of the Treasury; but no feeling of this kind existed in the mind of President Harrison. During the Secretary's illness in 1891 the President not only called daily, but cheerfully accepted control of the Chilean negotiations. In the same year he took upon himself the burden of the Behring Sea trouble, and later the negotiations respecting a renewal of reciprocity with Canada. Indeed, the precarious condition of the Secretary's health during the last two years of his service made it necessary for the President

to take personal charge, including the preparation of dispatches on all important matters pending in the Department of State. Nevertheless, the relations between the President and his Secretary continued as before. "In their intercourse," said Secretary of War Proctor, "the manner of each absolutely precluded the occurrence of anything that might cause either of them the slightest disquietude." Although the Secretary generally respected the President's purposes towards individuals, his expressed partiality sometimes cost Harrison the friendship of others. This was especially true in naming a collector of customs at Portland, Maine. Thomas B. Reed, then Speaker of the House of Representatives, preferred one man and Blaine another. President Harrison wished to oblige Reed, but finally yielded to his Secretary of State. The choice angered the distinguished Speaker, who, when subsequently invited to "board the Harrison band wagon," facetiously replied: "I never ride in an ice-cart."

This witty retort cleverly advertised the President's reputed coldness, which his opponents delighted to exploit in contrast to Blaine's magnetic qualities. Yet he possessed a kindly nature, sincere and ingenuous. Because of his tenderness and sympathy, he was asked to break to the widow the news of Secretary Windom's sudden death, and after terrible calamity had overwhelmed General Tracy's family, he was the first to meet and the last to leave his Secretary of the Navy. On the long march during the Civil War a tired soldier often shared his horse. It was midnight at Resaca before he ceased gathering the little keepsakes, marking the graves of the dead, and ministering to the wounded.

As the pre-convention campaign advanced the assaults became more bitter. The silver-producing States attacked him because he disbelieved in the free and unlimited coinage of silver. California thought him too favourably disposed to Chinese immigration. Others objected to his faithful enforcement of the Silver Act of 1890. But the burden of the criticism took the form of personal detraction and depre-

ciation of his availability. His refusal to promote the Secretary's son-in-law, an officer in the United States army, over the heads of a score of superiors no less capable, caused additional trouble, for although the Secretary apparently concurred in the President's policy of fair play, it won the open hostility of the Secretary's family. Henceforth the Blaine home became headquarters for those who desired the President's destruction.

It is certainly not surprising that in the absence of some word from the Secretary of State this continuous fire upon the President should make his friends, if not the President himself, suspicious of the Maine statesman. It seemed almost tragic that he did not publicly censure such attacks, if sincere in his February letter or in his expressed regard for the President, especially as his name furnished the only rally-point for the Harrison opponents. One sentence must have cleared the atmosphere. Yet assaults multiplied while the apparent beneficiary remained silent. To some it did not look like a vindictive silence, since such an act seemed alien to Blaine's good nature; but many of Harrison's friends believed it of a kind to which Blaine's notions of political methods made him singularly prone. That he opposed the President's nomination they had no doubt.

Blaine's attitude, however, became the source of much uneasiness among his backers, since it strengthened the belief that his continuance in the Cabinet emphasised the sincerity of his Clarkson letter. Indeed, the absolute necessity of severing this close official relationship with the President became so apparent that the anti-Administration leaders centred their influence upon bringing it about, and at the psychological moment, on the Saturday preceding the opening of the Convention, the Secretary, upon the advice of his son, Emmons Blaine, then at Minneapolis, and with the hearty approval of his family, tendered his resignation in the fewest words possible. Its brevity shocked the President, for on the preceding day Blaine had left the White House in the best of spirits. Harrison's reply, delivered ten min-

utes later, did not multiply words. It simply accepted the resignation.³

This act had the instant effect of unfurling a new flag, and for the moment of seeming to divide the delegates into two rival camps. For the first time the Blaine badge of red-silk, emblazoned with his picture and the words "The people's choice," appeared in abundance; a full-length portrait of the Secretary found room in the New York headquarters; and Warner Miller, nursing a grievance similar to Platt's, announced his support of the Maine statesman; while spectacular parades, with waving plumes and many bands, filled the streets with a volume of sound. Captivated by the outlook Thomas C. Platt wired the *New York World*: "Blaine's nomination on the first ballot is absolutely assured." The next day (June 6) he repeated: "We are going to nominate Blaine." Again on the 7th: "I am more confident of Blaine's nomination than ever," and on the 8th: "I am perfectly confident of Blaine's nomination."

It was noticeable, however, that the confidence expressed by the anti-Administration leaders also characterised the utterances of the Harrison managers. On June 6 Chauncey M. Depew telegraphed the *World*: "The President is a much stronger candidate to-day than he was in 1888." Again on the 7th: "Harrison's nomination is assured." On June 8th Hiscock wired: "There is not now and has not been since we came here any doubt about the President's nomination. He will win on the first ballot." On the 9th the Senator reported that "at a meeting of the Harrison delegates, held this morning with Depew as chairman, 468, or 12 more than are necessary to nominate, pledged themselves anew to vote

³ After the resignation Blaine and Harrison never met, but upon the announcement, twelve days later, of the death of Emmons Blaine, the son who represented his father at Minneapolis, the President conveyed his deepest sympathy, and in the following January he sincerely mourned the death of the distinguished leader himself, pronouncing a tribute to his memory as touching as his tender heart could put into words.

for the President. The pledged absentees increase this number to 520."

If the resignation of Blaine had shocked the Harrison managers, this coup d'état dazed the Blaine leaders. It practically settled the nomination on the first ballot. The *New York World* said, editorially: "The reputation Platt has earned for accurate reporting will not secure him a permanent job on the *World*." ⁴ Other vexations soon appeared. Depew refused to cancel his engagement to place the President in nomination; several New Yorkers began talking of McKinley; with two exceptions the Iowa delegates declared for Harrison; and the Michigan delegation candidly admitted that unless enough votes were in sight to secure Blaine's nomination on the first ballot, Alger's name would be presented. But the severest blow to Platt and Warner Miller occurred when the Convention, by a vote of 463 to 423, defeated a minority report from the committee on contested seats, thus excluding several Blaine delegates, the adverse vote representing more than a majority of the Convention. This took the piquancy out of the contest. Thereafter the anti-Administration leaders were content to keep their followers, especially those in New York, from deserting to McKinley, who had committed himself to Harrison. One ballot, however, quickly settled rumours of rapid changes, Harrison receiving $535\frac{1}{6}$ votes, Blaine $182\frac{5}{6}$, McKinley 182, scattering 5; necessary to a choice, 453. New York's vote stood: Harrison, 27; Blaine, 35; McKinley, 10. Platt pocketed his humiliation, declaring "we had nothing but a rope of sand. We did not have a candidate until two days before the convention met. Until Blaine resigned he did not allow any one to say he was a candidate." To which Hiscock replied: "But actions often speak louder than words."

By common consent the selection of a candidate for Vice President fell to New York, and outside delegates naturally turned to Levi P. Morton. He had filled the office satisfac-

⁴ June 11, 1892.

torily and was most acceptable to the President, who, if renominated, desired it might be the old ticket. Moreover, experience testified that no other New Yorker could add greater strength. Platt's prejudices, however, continued to govern him. He declared his disbelief in the success of the ticket, and, without counselling with Morton, but greatly to the Vice President's disappointment, as it later appeared, he assumed the rôle of benefactor by declining to allow him to be "sacrificed." It recalled Senator Conkling's opposition to Arthur's nomination in 1880, and encouraged the belief that Platt's action grew out of the fear that Morton would add too much strength to the ticket. Meanwhile, Depew and Hiscock, with an eye to the windward, favoured the selection of Whitelaw Reid, the brilliant editor and owner of the *New York Tribune*, whose wealth of experience fitted him for the high office, and on the presentation of his name by State Senator O'Connor and General Horace Porter of New York, he received the nomination by acclamation. Roosevelt declared that "Reid had the most gracious manners and winning ways of all the men he ever met."⁵ But Platt knew that his trenchant pen could take the hide off.

The platform reaffirmed the American doctrine of protection, declaring that articles which cannot be produced at home, except luxuries, should be admitted free, and that upon imports competing with the products of American labour there should be levied duties equal to the difference between wages abroad and at home. It called attention to the possibilities of reciprocity if administered by Republicans; favoured bimetallism under such restrictions that every dollar, paper or coin, shall be as good as any other; demanded the right of every citizen to cast and have honestly counted one free and unrestricted ballot; approved the Monroe doctrine, the restriction of criminal, pauper and contract immigration, and the usual declarations respecting home rule in Ireland, persecution of the Jews in Russia, control of trusts, extension of the free-delivery system, reform

⁵ Cortissoz's *Life of Reid*, Vol. 2, p. 278.

in the civil service, admission of the Territories as States, reclamation of arid public lands, and pensions to Civil War veterans. It added commendation of President Harrison's administration, and sympathy "with all wise and legitimate efforts to lessen and prevent the evils of intemperance and promote morality."

New York became the battle-ground. The campaign revealed deep interest in the coinage of silver and the proposed Federal Election Law,⁶ but the chief contention centred upon the tariff. The Republicans insisted that the McKinley Act had increased prosperity, and that the Democrats, by their platform declarations, had adopted a new doctrine wholly excluding the idea of discriminating duties to foster and diversify American industries, thus disclosing a strong drift toward free-trade, to which Henry Watterson had prepared the way. The Democrats, seeking to avoid the Watterson trap, took refuge under Cleveland's letter of acceptance, which completely nullified Watterson's "tariff for revenue only," and showed a sane interest in protecting domestic industries. His letter followed the tariff-plank refused by the national convention, providing that "in making reduction in taxes it is not proposed to injure any domestic industries, but rather to promote their healthy growth. . . . Many industries have come to rely upon legislation for successful continuance, so that any change of law must be at every step regardful of the labour and capital thus involved. The process of reform must be subject in its execution to this plain dictate of justice."

The campaign, however, lacked spirit. It was apparent that the Hill Democracy really wanted to defeat Cleveland. For several weeks Hill had sulked. An undertone of surliness also infected the Democratic State Committee. "In the East, particularly in New York," Watterson wrote the former President (July 8), "enemies lurk in your very cupboard, and strike at you from behind your chair or

⁶ To excuse its support of Cleveland, whom it despised, the New York *Sun* made "No Force Bill" its campaign cry.

table.”⁷ Henry Adams wrote: “No one showed much interest in the result. The two candidates were singular persons, of whom it was the common saying that one of them had no friends; the other, only enemies. . . . Yet Mr. Harrison was an excellent President, a man of ability and force; perhaps the best President the Republican party had put forward since Lincoln’s death.”⁸ Yet, on the whole, Adams felt a shade of preference for President Cleveland.

Had the Republicans presented a solid, enthusiastic front, assuring the Hill folks a reasonable certainty of success, it is probable their subtle campaign of revenge would have continued. But the Homestead strike, which began in July, seemed destined to result most helpfully to the Democrats. Moreover, Republican disaffection in New York foreboded disaster, since Platt’s attitude toward Harrison was apparently not less unfriendly than Hill’s hostility to Cleveland. Indeed, so ill-natured had the former Senator become that he declared “Harrison’s renomination caused a chattering of the teeth among the warm-blooded Republicans of the East. When there was added to it the choice of White-law Reid, a persistent assailant of the New York organisation, many of the New York delegates, including myself, wrapped ourselves in overcoats and ear-muffs, hurried from the convention hall and took the first train to New York.”⁹ In an effort to assuage his estrangement the President wrote him (August 17) kindly assuring him that “no reason exists on my part why our relations may not be absolutely friendly,” and “if any impression that I cherish a disrespect for or suspicion of you is in the way of your greater activity, I hope that has now been removed.” He added that “no promise, or anything that can be construed into a promise, of place or reward has been made by me or with my knowledge, to any one before or since the Minneapolis Convention, and none such will be made now or hereafter.

⁷ Watterson, *Autobiography*, Vol. 2, p. 268.

⁸ *The Education of Henry Adams*, p. 320.

⁹ *Autobiography*, pp. 246-7.

Every appointment will be left open until the time for making it arrives, and then determined in the light of that time and upon such proper considerations as may then present themselves. In this view I am advised you fully concur." In conclusion, he invited him to meet with a few other friends to whom he might submit his letter of acceptance and with whom he wished to consult as to the campaign.¹⁰

Rumour said Platt's purpose was to dominate the President, and it was darkly hinted that Harrison "was weakly willing to yield." But Reid wrote John Hay that "there were absolutely no promises, direct or implied, and there is no dust on anybody's knees."¹¹ Subsequently (September 29), Platt participated, contrary to his custom, in one of the great mass meetings of the campaign. Although Blaine, because of ill-health, did not enter the campaign, he made one speech in Westchester while the guest of Whitelaw Reid.

Cleveland's settlement with the Hill organisation soon followed the Republican conciliatory meeting. He thoroughly understood the situation and was as ready as Harrison to adjust matters. But not until his famous dinner with the dissatisfied elements at the Victoria Hotel did the managers in New York City and Brooklyn sympathetically respond. At the conference preceding the dinner, Murphy, Croker, and Sheehan represented the State organisation. Cleveland declared no discrimination should be shown between those who favoured or opposed his nomination. He expected the organisation to go to work at once. Murphy asked, "What organisation?" Cleveland replied, "The one of which you are the head." It was on this understanding, Murphy claimed, that the State committee took control of the campaign, including the disbursement of funds. This gave Murphy opportunity of helping many legislative candidates who subsequently supported him for United States senator in place of Hiscock.

Nevertheless, the betting for a time leaned towards Har-

¹⁰ Platt, *Autobiography*, pp. 247-51.

¹¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Reid*, Vol. 2, p. 182.

rison,¹² and the registration proved satisfactory. But the October election in Ohio, where the Republicans barely escaped defeat, showed the "silent vote" headed the other way. Senator Sherman declared "that the personality of Cleveland and his autocratic command of his party kept it in line, while his firm adherence to sound financial principles, in spite of the tendency of his party to free coinage and irredeemable money, commanded the respect and secured the vote of thousands of Republican business men."¹³ No one, however, foresaw that a tide was rising which would sweep into the Democratic column all the doubtful Northern States, with Illinois, Wisconsin, California, and one elector in Ohio, giving Cleveland 277 electoral votes, Harrison 145, and Weaver, Prohibitionist, 22. Not less surprising was Cleveland's plurality of 44,475 in New York, occasioned by a marked decrease in the Republican vote in up-state counties, and by increased Democratic majorities in New York and Kings Counties. These conditions were reflected in the character of the Legislature, the Senate having 17 Democrats, 14 Republicans, 1 Independent; the Assembly, 74 Democrats, 54 Republicans.¹⁴

Many and various reasons for the result found expression. William C. Whitney thought it a popular uprising against a high protective tariff. Senator Hill pronounced it a victory for tariff reform and a defeat of the so-called Force Bill. Henry Watterson attributed it "to the Homestead riots which transferred the labour vote bodily from the Republicans to the Democrats." Senator Sherman voiced the opinion that "the causes contributing to Cleveland's

¹² The story is told that Whitney asked Croker to join in a pool for half a million dollars to change the betting at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Croker said he had no funds. "But I'll put you in for \$100,000," said Whitney, and after the election handed him that amount as his share of the dividend.

¹³ *Recollections of*, p. 1173.

¹⁴ The House of Representatives stood: Democrats, 220; Republicans, 126; People's party, 8.

election might have defeated any Republican.”¹⁵ A St. Lawrence County farmer also had his reason. “Republicans claim,” he said, “that statistics prove the country is more prosperous and that we are richer than we were two years ago. Yet most of the farmers round here are not any better off, and I made up my mind that if a change of Administration would bring good times I wanted a change. It may make things a good deal worse. But I am willing to try. If I find the Democrats have deceived me, I shall vote the Republican ticket again in 1896.”¹⁶ Whitelaw Reid, writing to George Ticknor Curtis, said: “The people have evidently made up their minds that the McKinley bill went too far. The working classes have developed the belief that it is their own unions and not the tariff that secured high wages.”¹⁷ In a note to Reid, the President’s comment had a humorous flavour. “Faults of management, if any, cannot account for the result, which had more general causes. The workingman declined to walk under the protective umbrella because it sheltered his employer also. He has smashed it for the fun of seeing the silk stockings take the rain. If he finds the employer has a waterproof coat, while he is undefended, he may help to rig up the umbrella.”¹⁸

¹⁵ *Recollections of*, p. 1174.

¹⁶ *New York Tribune*, November 21, 1892.

¹⁷ Cortissoz, *Life of Reid*, Vol. 2, p. 186.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

CHAPTER XXI

MAYNARD'S PUNISHMENT

1893

THE overwhelming victory in the preceding year seemed to deprive the Hill leaders of ordinary political sense. In the earlier days of his authority Croker had shown discretion, profiting by the mistakes of his predecessors and avoiding their misfortunes. Where Tweed was reckless, he had been careful; where Kelly had stubbornly refused to yield, he had been conciliatory. Instead of driving men out of the organisation by hunching patronage in the hands of a few, he endeavoured, by scattering it, to bring others in. He had also sought to mollify public opinion by recognising the importance of the press. Tweed and Kelly thought it sufficient for the Wigwam to own a newspaper or two, while Croker, although possessing little magnetism and no social qualities, maintained friendly relations with all papers, showing courtesy alike to reporters and editors. But success in the election of 1892 completely turned his head. He called a reporter and outlined the municipal policy that Gilroy, the newly elected Mayor, would follow. "You may say for me," which became his stereotyped phrase, "that offices will be held by politicians. I don't object to business men as such, but if they serve me they must devote their entire time to the business of the people. I shall have no other kind in office."¹ This was the absolutism of Tweed in 1870.

David B. Hill was not less presumptuous. He boldly took the credit for carrying New York. "The State organisation as well as the organisations in nine-tenths of the counties,"

¹ *New York Evening Post*, January 4, 1893.

he said, "were in the hands of my loyal supporters." Hitherto he had concealed his political intentions, veiling his visits to the bosses, maintaining an aloof manner, and practising rigid economy in speech. Now he appeared publicly in the Hoffman House café, and without thought of the Cleveland wing of the party, planned with Croker in the open, selecting William Sulzer for speaker of the Assembly, Edward Murphy Jr. for United States senator, and Isaac H. Maynard for reappointment to the Court of Appeals.

After the organisation of the Assembly a Committee on Rules, composed of three Tammany members and one McLaughlin henchman, took control of all legislation. Only measures it approved could be advanced or passed. A motion to make a bill the special order, or to suspend the rules to read a bill out of its order, must first be referred to that Committee, whose report stood as the judgment of the Assembly unless otherwise ordered by a two-thirds vote. With this power Lieutenant-Governor Sheehan governed Buffalo from Albany, filling offices and transferring control of elections to men of his own selection.

With similar disregard of public opinion the Hill leaders set about the election of Murphy for United States senator as they had put through other indefensible jobs. Intelligent citizens of the State knew very well that he lacked the necessary qualifications for the high office; but because he had muffled his ambition in 1891, Hill pledged him support to succeed Senator Hiscock, relying upon his assistance in time of need. Croker likewise had his selfish reasons. He wished to concentrate power in himself, and he counted on Murphy to extend his influence in Washington. He had not held Hill in high esteem since the latter failed in 1889 to keep his promise in the famous deal involving double-headed police and park commissioners, with an addition of four police judges, and he now hesitated to rely upon him as a connecting link with the White House. As for Murphy's unfitness it distressed him no more than it did those members of the Legislature who took their orders from him.

To meet the criticism of Murphy's "unfitness," however, County Committees were secretly requested to prepare endorsements. This work brought to Albany a daily batch of pledges and recommendations. To conciliate the President-elect Governor Flower invited him to attend a reception (December 17) which, he wrote, "will give our party associates the first opportunity they have had to exchange congratulations on the glorious victory, and to assure you of their earnest support and co-operation in accomplishing the reforms expected of your Administration. I shall expect you to make the Executive Mansion your home during your sojourn here." But Cleveland, in a brief note of thanks and regrets, showed an indisposition to give comfort to his political enemies. He was not unmindful of Murphy's disqualifications and he candidly said so to Murphy himself, while he urged William C. Whitney to enter the contest. But a word with Croker convinced Whitney that the Tammany chief was glued to Murphy, making intrigue hopeless.

Meantime prominent party leaders and journals without as well as within the State entered loud protest. To them Murphy represented at the Chicago convention a type of opposition which the country at large had overwhelmingly rebuked, and their dislike found abundant expression. The Anti-snappers also nursed their antagonism. As these murmurs swelled into a volume of criticism, the President-elect, in response to the appeals of his friends, let his views be known. "It ought not to be necessary to repeat for the public," he said, "what I have so often expressed to so many in private conversation, among them Mr. Murphy himself, Mr. Croker, and gentlemen who have been prominent in the party from every part of the State. . . . The interests of the State and of the party, it seems to me, demand the selection of a Senator who can not only defend the principles of our party, but who can originate and promote policies that may be presented for consideration in the Senate. In order to insure this the Senator from New York should be a man not only experienced in public affairs, but who has

a clear conception of the vital issues with which he must deal. Speaking frankly as I have to those entitled to know my views, it does not seem to me that the selection of Mr. Murphy shows a desire or intention of placing in the Senate a man of such a type. This first use of our power would, I fear, cause much disappointment, not only in New York, but in the country. This the party ought not to be called upon to face when it is considered how much there is to do, and what serious difficulties have to be surmounted before it can be done.”²

This frank and dignified utterance, so characteristic of the writer's courage, produced a profound sensation. Although it appeared as an interview, its studied form, phrased with the force of his signed utterances, gave it a sort of official character. It recalled his famous tariff message of December, 1887, and his silver letter of February, 1891. Its purpose was variously interpreted. Some thought it exhibited a disposition to become an absolute dictator of the party; others, that in a closely divided Senate he wanted at least one Senator from New York in accord with his views; while his close personal friends received it simply as a plain truth spoken with courage.

Although the President-elect showed no disposition to attempt party control in the State, his spirited thrust at Murphy emboldened the latter's opponents. The *World* declared that he “possessed not a single qualification for the great office which he seeks. He is a bluff hale fellow and a capable boss. He should be satisfied with the rewards of such a character and such a part. He is not fitted for the Senate.”³ Perhaps the most stinging criticism came from Smith M. Weed, who charged Murphy with bitterly opposing Cleveland since 1884, declaring that “his wonderful productions in Chicago were the crystallisation of his own animosities. In the election that followed he raised no funds for campaign purposes, but very actively distrib-

² New York *World* and New York *Times*, December 27, 1892.

³ New York *World*, December 28, 1892.

uted what others raised with an eye single to the election of his friends to the Assembly." ⁴

These bitter attacks had the effect of checking committee endorsements and of disclosing in several counties anti-Murphy majorities. Even the Electoral College which convened at Albany in January (1893) deeply disappointed Hill, who had planned to humiliate Cleveland by having them endorse Murphy for the Senate, when voting for him for President. Their jealous loyalty had caused their appointment at the "snap" convention in the preceding February, but the reaction in party sentiment had aroused a suspicion of their fealty, and to prevent any insurgency the Senator now seated himself in an adjoining room in full view and hearing. Nevertheless, several Electors declared it neither the time nor the place to act upon such a matter, and of the thirty-six members four voted against the resolution and eight remained silent. Croker, one of the Electors, resented Hill's intrusion. "That man," he said, pointing to the Senator, "ought to be in Washington attending to his duties."

Yet Croker remained loyal to Murphy. "Among the real Democrats in the State," he said, "there is no opposition to him and no cause for any." ⁵ And so far as the record showed on the day of election (January 17) Croker was right, since every Democrat in the Legislature, including the two senators and three assemblymen who had boldly opposed him in caucus, voted for him. The Republicans supported Hiscock. ⁶

In directing their attention to legislation, the party leaders, confident of again carrying the State, secured the passage of a bill authorising a Constitutional convention in June, 1894. It was not a profound secret that Hill,

⁴ New York *Evening Post*, January 7, 1893.

⁵ New York *Tribune*, December 29, 1892.

⁶ The vote stood: Senate, Murphy 17, Hiscock 12; Assembly, Murphy 73, Hiscock 52. One Senator, James T. Edwards of Chautauqua, an Independent, voted for Whitelaw Reid.

resenting the party relations of most of the up-state judges of the Supreme Court, determined to have all such judges chosen at general State elections as are judges of the Court of Appeals, instead of by the electors of the several existing judicial districts. Thereafter, Hill was regarded an inspired politician.

The reappointment and confirmation of Isaac H. Maynard to the Court of Appeals added to an unworthy record. Conscious of the offensive character of the conspiracy, Governor Flower sought to smooth the way by obtaining letters recommending him as an honest man; but he found it difficult to obtain them. Those who knew Maynard esteemed him highly as a courteous, accomplished, and able official. Lawyers liked him. As stated elsewhere, President Cleveland had had a profound regard for him, appointing him, after his defeat for secretary of state, to an honourable place in Washington. But few men of high repute, since the exposure of his conduct in the Dutchess County affair, cared publicly to exonerate him or commend his integrity.

To remove the Governor's belief in Maynard's disclaimer of any connection with the action of the State Board of Canvassers, the State Bar Committee, in its appeals protesting his reappointment, declared that "Maynard saw the Board count the fraudulent returns, although well aware that the decision of the Court of Appeals required the Board to count the corrected returns, in the removal of which Maynard was the chief party concerned." The scathing arraignment lifted his offence into full view and gave to the disclaimer the character of a confession. Nevertheless, the Governor reappointed him, exciting an indignation that surpassed, if possible, the outcry in the preceding year.

Ten months later when the Democratic State Convention met at Saratoga (October 5), the wisdom of nominating Maynard for the Court of Appeals became the one troublesome question. Hill and other leaders, including Murphy, Croker, and Sheehan, did not approve it, yet no one had the courage to oppose it. "You've got to have some heart, even

in politics," Hill said to George M. Beebe. Something had to be done, however, and it occurring to Hill that Maynard might be nominated and then withdraw, he wrote him on the day before the convention (October 4) suggesting that "in view of the evidence of opposition," he might "retire for the sake of harmony"; adding, "this is the most painful letter I ever penned." Sheehan refused to carry the message, but it reached its destination by special delivery. After sleeping over it, Maynard replied: "I am sure you would not expect me to take a step which I could never regard without a sense of humiliation and shame, and which in my judgment would cause me the loss of my own self-respect and the respect of my friends."⁷ Still, the fear of being sacrificed inspired him to notify Murphy and Sheehan, then in Saratoga, that his nomination must be made.

This ended the matter, and the convention went into session. Everything passed off harmoniously until the presentation of Maynard for judge of the Court of Appeals, when, suddenly, Robert Wiederman, a delegate from Rockland County, told the truth. His courage added to the storm of hisses and probably increased the roar of applause that greeted the convention's action; but his words voiced an indignation not less general than that which found expression over the snap convention of February, 1892.⁸ The *World* declared it "an affront to the moral sentiment of the State and a fitting climax to the sort of machine politics and boss rule that subjects the party to the will of an oligarchy."⁹

The Republican State Convention met at Syracuse on the following day (October 6). Defeat had greatly depressed the party. Methods that violated every propriety of politics seemed to strengthen rather than weaken the "oligarchy,"

⁷ Alton B. Parker, *Eulogy of Hill*, pp. 20, 21.

⁸ The candidates were: Secretary of State, Card Meyer Jr., Queens County; Comptroller, Frank Campbell, Steuben; Treasurer, Hugh Duffy, Cortland; Atty.-General, S. W. Rosendale, Albany; Engineer, Martin Schenck, Rensselaer; Judge Court of Appeals, Isaac H. Maynard.

⁹ New York *World*, November 8, 1892.

and although a repetition of such tactics had again aroused general dissatisfaction, it created in the minds of Republicans little if any real confidence of victory.

Albeit, nearly every Republican leader in the sixty counties appeared and answered to the roll-call. Depew and Platt were cheered as they entered, and Hiscock, although crippled in prestige by his recent retirement, received a cordial greeting. Patrick H. Cullinan, as temporary chairman, talked of Democratic misdeeds, while the optimistic Depew thought the industrial depression, due to the fear of tariff changes, would surely benefit the party. However, it was not an exultant occasion. The delegates had witnessed the desperate methods of the Hill-Crocker-Murphy-Sheehan machine, and long, bitter experience had taught them how subservient the rank and file become when controlled by the lust for party power. Still, the convention's mental attitude was one of fighting the people's battle, and their platform struck the conspirators a severe blow. It arraigned them for the theft of a senator in defiance of the Courts; for the principal conspirator's reward by a seat on the Court of Appeals; for increased salaries and taxes; for broken pledges and gifts of valuable franchises to favoured interests; and for the prostitution of the civil service. "So audacious is this Machine in its operations," it continued, "that even Democratic journals of unquestioned loyalty have denounced its disreputable legislation, its tampering with bills on their passage, and its alterations of duly enrolled legislation while in transit to the Governor."

With such a record of shame to weaken their opponents, however, Republicans did not seem especially anxious to become candidates except for judge of the Court of Appeals. Indeed, in the effort to secure proper candidates from different sections of the State, it became necessary, in one instance at least, to select a man without his knowledge. Toward the end of the lifeless proceedings the convention gained a bit of colour in selecting a judge for the Court of Appeals. An impression obtained that Maynard might

possibly suffer for his misdeeds, and with the New York City delegation divided between Edward T. Bartlett, supported by Platt, and James S. Smith, backed by the county committee of which he was chairman, the competition developed into a lively struggle. As a compromise the Steuben delegation, naturally relying upon the aid of western counties, presented William H. Rumsey. But Platt, who had encouraged his followers not to allow the depressing defeat of the preceding years to weaken their control, soon had his up-state friends in line for Bartlett, who won on the first ballot.¹⁰

In the remaining days Republicans exhibited little of the life that usually characterises their campaigns. Voices that had heretofore aroused enthusiasm and created hope of success remained silent. The defeat of the preceding year seemed to have unsettled confidence and friendships, leaving no common interests. Yet the Maynard conspiracy could not be forgotten or forgiven, and press and pulpit published and preached it.

Nevertheless, Hill did not weaken his efforts. In a speech at Brooklyn he put his spurs into the friends of other candidates, declaring if Maynard was defeated the Democratic party would be defeated. To avoid such an event the Croker management began practising every form of electoral rascality, such as colonization of voters, illegal registration, repeating, and the denial to voters of their legal rights. In the counties of Erie, Rensselaer, New York and Kings the treatment of the laws governing elections became a daily topic of contempt and ridicule. It seemed to be the purpose of district leaders to win by increasing illegal voters, and under their dexterity tramps were housed and registration

¹⁰ The vote stood: Smith, 80; Rumsey, 98; Bartlett, 532. The following candidates were nominated: Secretary of State, John Palmer, Albany; Controller, James A. Roberts, Erie; Treasurer, Addison B. Colvin, Warren; Atty.-Gen., Theodore E. Hancock, Onondaga; Engineer, Campbell W. Adams, Oneida; Court of Appeals, Edward F. Bartlett, New York.

lists expanded. In the notorious third Assembly district the reckless audacity of Timothy D. Sullivan, who turned his saloons into bed-houses, resulted in a larger registration than the high-water mark of the preceding year; while the spirit of wickedness culminated in the arrest and imprisonment of citizens armed with Supreme Court processes to watch the election at Gravesend as conducted by John Y. McKane.

These methods naturally added to the public indignation. The investigation of the New York *Herald* (October 22) disclosed a concerted plan to approve Maynard's course by the perpetration of other crimes, and a feverish excitement swayed the people as election day approached. A report subsequently made by a legislative committee declared that "sufficient appears upon the record to show that honest elections had no existence in the City of New York, but that, upon the contrary, a huge conspiracy against the purity of the elective franchise was participated in by the municipal police, whereby the rights of individuals were trampled ruthlessly underfoot and crime against the ballot held high carnival."¹¹ Yet Republican candidates who had carefully canvassed the State expressed little if any hope of victory, while the friends of Maynard confidently counted on success. When it became known, therefore, that Maynard was defeated by over 100,000 plurality it came like a bolt from the blue. It showed the extent of the resentment, which carried with it both branches of the Legislature, a large share of the delegates to the Constitutional convention, a Republican mayor and board of aldermen in Brooklyn, and the entire State ticket other than the Court of Appeals by pluralities ranging from 20,000 to 25,000.¹²

"This disaster," said the *World*, "was courted when the State machine defied decency by the nomination of a crime-tainted candidate for judge of our highest court. It

¹¹ Report of Lexow committee, 1894.

¹² Legislature, Senate, Reps. 19, Dems. 13; Assembly, Reps. 75, Dems. 53.

wantonly violated the sentiment of reverential respect with which the people of New York have ever regarded their courts of last resort. The bosses had fastened the party with the rule of a clique, and the party has revolted. The Hill-Murphy-Sheehan, Croker-McLaughlin regency is dethroned. That is the whole story.”¹³

Governor Flower and Richard Croker declared it the result of business depression. Senator Hill thought it due to several causes, emphasising “the utter disregard shown to the wishes of the people by the personal machines conducted by Croker in New York, McLaughlin in Brooklyn, and Sheehan in Buffalo.”¹⁴ He regarded Croker as exceedingly lucky to have escaped destruction, “for people are always suspicious of men in political life who become suddenly rich during a period of political success.” Of Maynard’s nomination he said it was “a natural and logical nomination, which could not, in honour, be avoided,” and attributed his defeat “to the old antipathy of the liquor men” and “to the determination of the Cleveland Democrats to defeat the State ticket.”¹⁵ Accepting these views the Republicans expressed the opinion that the business depression, stimulated by the fear of a change in the tariff, had also contributed to their success as it did in Ohio, Massachusetts, and other States. Thomas C. Platt, joyous over the first victory that had come under his assumed leadership, declared, “Divine Providence did it.”¹⁶

¹³ *New York World*, November 9, 1893.

¹⁴ *New York Tribune*, December 4, 1893.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Autobiography*, p. 267.

CHAPTER XXII

EFFORTS TO HOBBLE PLATT

1894

FOR several years a large body of Republicans had regarded Thomas C. Platt's relation to the party as irrational. The defeat of President Harrison in 1892 not only excited distrust of his party loyalty, but his inability to organise effective groups of active young men to check the wholesale debauchery at the polls in New York City, complaints of which had been submitted by the Chamber of Commerce, the Society for the Prevention of Crime, and other commercial and social bodies, created the belief that his boasted devotion to the party centred, if it did not end, in the support of those only who manufactured delegates obedient to his will.

The unexpected and overwhelming victory of the Republicans in 1893, therefore, quickly strengthened the desire of Platt's active opponents to relieve the party of his domination, and early in 1894 the New York county committee authorised thirty leading professional and business men, headed by George Bliss, to present a plan of reorganisation.¹ Their address to the party disclosed the spirit and the purpose of their reformatory work. "We have no personal ends to serve. No one of us aspires to any position either in or through the organisation. We bring to our work the unselfish determination to make the new movement a success, and to give to it, after it is created, our earnest and

¹ Among the members of this famous committee were Cornelius N. Bliss, Elihu Root, Joseph H. Choate, George J. Seabury, Horace Porter, Daniel Butterfield, Anson G. McCook, William Strauss, William M. Strong, S. V. R. Crugar, Charles S. Smith, William Brookfield, Jesse Seligman, Samuel Thomas, Edwin Einstein, George W. Lyon and Edward Mitchell.

continuous support. We pledge ourselves to secure enrolling officers who will make no distinction between Republicans and will exclude every Democrat. In case an unfaithful enrolling officer is appointed we pledge ourselves to remove him at once." Thus in fiery earnest these anti-Platt organisers set about effecting their deliverance by substituting the election district for the assembly district, with the hope of getting nearer to the people, and of avoiding those Assembly leaders "who knew the way to East 14th Street without a guide, and carried a night-key to the door of Tammany's chief."

In opposition to this plan Platt secretly encouraged and afterward publicly endorsed a rival organisation, called for deceptive purposes the "anti-Machine Republicans," which provided for an organisation in each election and assembly district, with a county committee made up of one member from each election district, an executive committee consisting of two members from each assembly district, and an advisory committee of forty, appointed by the chairman of the Executive Committee with the consent of the county committee. In excuse for its formation the Platt inspired statement charged that whatever reforms the Committee of Thirty might inaugurate, the same discredited managers would continue to maintain its power by the aid of Tammany Hall. "The author of that Committee who named all of its members," continued the statement, "is Colonel George Bliss, the special counsel of a Tammany police commissioner. His active aids are the amiable group of gentlemen whose names have been for years before the public as candidates for governor, mayor, and various appointive offices. The rest of the Committee are simply exemplary citizens who have allowed their names to be used. One of them is in Japan at present. It is a fact that the most conspicuous figures in it are men who have had ample opportunity to demonstrate their ability as political managers. Edward Mitchell was president of the County Committee in 1885. Elihu Root succeeded him in 1886, and S. V. R. Crugar

kept the job from 1887 to 1890, during which time the Republican party steadily dwindled in numbers and forcefulness. For the past two years William Brookfield, the present figure-head, has tried to show his fitness as a leader. Cornelius N. Bliss, another signer, served as chairman of the State Republican Committee in 1887, and the burdens of the office bore so heavily that he flew to Europe and did not return until the Presidential campaign of 1888 was well under way, from the activities of which he kept at a respectful distance; but after the election, to secure a place in the Cabinet, he precipitated a feud between the two Republican leaders of the State—Mr. Platt and Mr. Miller—that rent the party in twain and made it easy for the Democrats to carry the State.”² Platt supplemented this statement, so characteristic of his ingenuous piquancy, by declaring the Bliss plan unworkable, expensive, and too obstructive to honourable ambition, since it abolished the friendly rivalry of district leaders, who vied with each other in reporting to their assembly organisation the largest gains in an election contest.

These rival organisations, which exhibited the breadth and deep-seated animosity of the party division, immediately engaged in the selection of a Speaker of the Assembly. The Anti-Platt element sought a man of courage and independence who would decline to take orders, and as a majority of the assemblymen had won without financial assistance from the Broadway office, it encouraged the hope that Hamilton Fish of Putnam might succeed. Though of a distinguished family, Fish did not belong to the highest type of men. He had more quality than loyalty, and less modesty than ability. But his long experience in the Assembly and his pronounced hostility to Platt, coupled with a parliamentary courage that never winced in the presence of opposition, lifted him for the moment above an undergrowth of faults and gave him the support of members who shared his professed dislike of Platt. Nevertheless, George

² *New York Tribune*, February 1, 1894.

R. Malby of St. Lawrence, the accredited Platt candidate, proved the stronger. His agreeable manners helped him, but the assemblymen's knowledge that Platt's smile or frown made or shattered individual careers brought him victory. Thus in many counties it became the habit of politicians to talk Anti-Platt to an incoherent opposition at home and act otherwise at Albany. As a warning to future insurgents, Speaker Malby denied Fish the privilege of heading the Committee on Ways and Means.

After this punitive exhibition, legislative business proceeded under the direction of Platt, whom Speaker Malby visited at each week-end. There was no delay in adopting a resolution authorising a committee, headed by Senator Lexow, to investigate the wholesale debauchery at the polls in New York City. With equal alacrity a bill reapportioning the State for legislative purposes was prepared for the use of the Constitutional convention, which would restore to Republicans their former advantage. It soon became evident, however, that bills promotive of reforms, such as giving New York's Mayor the right to remove heads of departments, or substituting a salary for the sheriff's fee system, in no wise interested the Platt leaders. If one passed the Assembly, the Senate held it up. So regularly did this occur that former Speaker Sulzer taunted the Republicans with planning to make a record by having favourable action in the Assembly and hold-ups in the Senate. "It cannot be denied," said the *Tribune*, "that certain Republican senators and assemblymen are in no way more elevated or honourable than the Tammany leaders themselves. It is time for plain speaking. The highest interests of the City and State are at stake."³ Other journals and several great mass meetings spoke as plainly. These protests resulted in caucus action, but failed to obtain amendments to the corrupt practice act, or to abolish unnecessary State commissions which had rapidly increased under Tammany control. However, an act dividing the police board equally

³ New York *Tribune*, April 12, 1894.

between Platt and Croker found favour. Of this arrangement Theodore Roosevelt said, after an experience of two years as police commissioner: "Our great work was stamping out dishonesty so far as the ridiculous bi-partisan law would permit."⁴

This domination of the Legislature for personal or factional interests arrayed many of the more serious men of the party against Platt's methods, especially his practice of secretly obtaining large contributions from big business, under the promise of immunity from "strike" bills, and of using such funds secretly for the nomination and election of legislators and other officials who would do his bidding. Wheeler H. Peckham, a lawyer of State-wide reputation, in an address before the Good Government Club in 1894, declared that this custom had practically ended the day of the lobby. "When the Democrats are in power," he said, "the leader of Tammany takes its place. He handles yearly a large amount of money and is accountable to no one. He says whether a bill shall pass, and corporations pay large amounts for 'peace,' as they call it. The Metropolitan Telephone Company pays \$50,000 a year. I know of one corporation which pays a similar amount. As counsel I went twice to Albany to defeat the passage of a bill and could not get a hearing. But the measure failed, and several months after a subscription list was quietly passed around. As Mr. Tilden so fitly said: 'It was a case of sending up the stuff to Albany.'"⁵

In commenting upon this address the *Post* added: "It was understood last winter (1894) that Platt put Croker's system into use. We have been assured by the officials of many corporations that all give something. When it is remembered that there are in this city fully twenty-two hundred corporations, with an aggregate nominal capital of two billions of dollars, all of which are exposed to hostile legislation at Albany, some idea of the amount collected

⁴ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 193.

⁵ New York *Evening Post*, January 21, 1895.

can be formed. Competent judges estimate that Croker collected, when Tammany controlled the Governor and both branches of the Legislature, between two and four millions a year. That was the source of his sudden wealth. Platt is not suspected of pocketing any of it. He uses it as a fertiliser of boss politics. A candidate for the Legislature, wishing expense money, calls on him and gets a liberal contribution. If elected he sits as Platt's personal property. With a ready cash fund the boss can always buy a majority at any primary or political organisation election." ⁶

Speaking from personal knowledge Theodore Roosevelt declared that "Senator Platt had the same inborn capacity for the kind of politics which many big Wall Street men have shown for not wholly dissimilar types of finance. It was his chief interest, and he applied himself to it unremittingly every day in the year. The necessary funds came from big corporations and men of wealth . . . who recognised him as an honourable man—not only a man of his word, but a man who, whenever he received a favour, could be trusted to do his best to repay it on any occasion that arose. . . . These contributions were given in the guise of contributions for campaign purposes. . . . They were simply put into Mr. Platt's hands and treated by him as in the campaign chest. Then he distributed them in the districts where they were most needed by the candidates and organisation leaders. . . . A man in a doubtful district might win only because of the help Mr. Platt gave him. Such a man felt grateful, and, because of his good qualities, joined with the purely sordid and corrupt healers and crooked politicians to become a part of the Platt machine. . . . The country machine of New York under David B. Hill was probably more efficient, but Platt's organisation became more powerful and in a position of greater control than any other Republican machine in the country, excepting in Pennsylvania." ⁷

⁶ New York *Evening Post*, January 21, 1895.

⁷ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, pp. 298, 301, 302.

It was this system, so offensively illustrated in the Legislature of 1894, that Platt's opponents determined, if possible, to destroy, and as soon as it adjourned several of the old Half-Breed leaders, backed by a troop of citizens, prominent in business and in social and philanthropic circles, sought to control the Republican State Convention, which met at Saratoga on September 17th to nominate a candidate for Governor. Immediately Platt announced Levi P. Morton as his choice. It came as a distinct challenge to his opponents, who had a clear vision that the nomination and election of the former Vice President, exploited as the work of Platt's skill, would firmly establish the latter as the accepted Boss of the party, and to prevent such a calamity opposition appeared in every section of the State. Although they could name no single efficient competitor, several candidates responded. The friends of James A. Roberts of Buffalo, proud of his admirable and independent record as State comptroller, presented his name. Other prominent Republicans, notably Stewart L. Woodford of Brooklyn, Daniel Butterfield of New York, the famous general, and Leslie M. Russell of St. Lawrence, likewise became candidates. J. Sloat Fassett also appeared in opposition. Having vainly sought the support of Platt,⁸ he boldly announced, with some show of resentment, his determination to enter the contest. "There may be a funeral," he said, "but it will have the gaiety of an Irish wake."

As the pre-convention campaign advanced the selection of delegates indicated no enthusiasm for Morton's nomination. His absence of support in the Southern tier counties became so noticeable that after his return from Europe (August 27) he declined to permit his candidacy, and later (September 9) insisted upon having pledges from a majority of the delegates before the presentation of his name

⁸ "Fassett protested he was entitled to the nomination. He called at my Broadway office and rebuked me for refusing to give him another chance to run." T. C. Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 505.

to the convention. A disposition to concentrate on Chauncey M. Depew or Cornelius N. Bliss cheered the Anti-Platt forces, and had either been in the country at the critical moment such action might possibly have materialised into a nomination.

Meantime the delayed union of the Anti-Platt forces tended to divide their policy. One wing proposed withdrawing their opposition to Morton, and making it appear that Platt had simply fallen into line with the popular will, since the former Vice President, because of his experience and disclosed ability to fill high office, had elements of strength possessed by none of the other candidates. The other wing, especially the representatives of the Committee of Thirty, refused to accept such camouflage. To them Morton was a colourless candidate, representing no criticism of Democratic mistakes and no sentiment for reforms. They believed his nomination meant a closed mouth, an open pocketbook, the triumph of Platt, and a doubtful election. To add to the confusion Comptroller Roberts, by reason of a severe illness, withdrew as a candidate, while Depew, upon his return from Europe, refused to enter the contest. Thus out of discouragement came disagreement, which finally compelled Platt's opponents to enter the convention without leadership or the hope of fusion. Indeed, for three days before the convention assembled Morton's nomination seemed so certain that several loyal party journals warned the Republicans that the acceptance of Platt's orders might lead to a repetition of the Folger incident. That the leaders themselves feared such a mishap appeared later when Benjamin F. Tracy, in presenting Morton's name, declared with impressive emphasis that his candidacy sourced in the suggestion of no one man, nor could his selection be credited to the work of any one man or clique of men. Nevertheless, Fassett, as well as Russell and Butterfield, bitterly opposed the nomination of Morton by acclamation.

The first ballot, however, giving Morton more than two-thirds of the votes,⁹ proved that those with whom Platt co-operated in the up-state counties, although deploring, perhaps, his Tammany methods, especially in the conduct of municipal affairs in New York City, preferred a vigorous, energetic leadership, to a drifting, vacillating management, and so long as he favoured protection, honest money, and other economic principles to which the party adhered as the source of the country's prosperity, they chose to accept his dictation.¹⁰

To allay the discontent exhibited over Morton's nomination the organisation leaders promised an absolutely free-for-all contest for second place, and the appearance of nine earnest candidates for lieutenant-governor indicated how highly a State convention esteemed the privilege of making an unbossed nomination. If Platt had a choice he betrayed it only through Louis F. Payn's interview with Fassett, whom he urged to withdraw from the race for Governor and take second place. But Fassett declined. "If I did," he said, "Republicans would charge a prearranged plan and that my candidacy for first place was merely a blind." It proved a mistake. Had he accepted Payn's suggestion little doubt existed of his nomination, for the ringing sentences of Archie E. Baxter of Elmira, when presenting his name for Governor, stirred the only wild applause of the day. Delegates had heard Fassett in 1891, again in 1892 as temporary chairman of the Chicago convention, and his acceptance must have broadened his future career.

⁹ The result was as follows: Morton, 547; Fassett, 69; Woodford, 38; Bliss, 37; Butterfield, 29; Russell, 14.

¹⁰ "It would be an entire mistake to suppose that Mr. Platt's lieutenants were either all bad men or all influenced by unworthy motives. He was constantly doing favours for men. He had won the gratitude of many good men. In the country districts especially, there were many places where his machine included a majority of the leading and substantial citizens. Some of his strongest and most efficient lieutenants were disinterested men of high character." Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 302.

With Fassett out of the race, Charles T. Saxton of Wayne led from the outset. He had a warm heart, a clear head, and a cool temper. If he occasionally trimmed, he never resorted to timid counsels, and what he promised he did. A disposition to better things and his deep interest in ballot reform earned him great prestige; but his courage as a senator, whom Lieutenant-Governor Sheehan threatened to arrest and imprison when he declared "I will call the roll," raised him into State prominence and left its impress upon the party. Although antagonised by men of equal ability and of longer public service, some of whom opposed Morton while others cranked the Platt machine, Saxton's character for poise, for seriousness of purpose, and for usefulness at critical times kept him, in spite of intrigues and parliamentary obstacles, a favourite to the end, and before the announcement of the ballot his nomination became unanimous.¹¹

The choice of a candidate for judge of the Court of Appeals aroused a similar contest, resulting, after the second ballot, in the unanimous selection of Albert Haight of Buffalo. Sweet in temper and of cool courage and calm judgment, Judge Haight was fitted by temperament and by study for the bench. He embodied the spirit of law and judicial fairness.

The platform denounced the recently enacted revenue measure which President Cleveland refused to sign; grouped the facts showing that the reduction of wages and the loss of employment benefited importers and injured home industries; declared the path of protection pointed the way to prosperity; and bitterly condemned the corruption and crime disclosed in New York and Queens counties by the

¹¹ The ballot, before changes to Saxton began, stood as follows: Charles T. Saxton, 347; George E. Green, Mayor of Binghamton, 41; James W. Wadsworth, then serving his fourth term in Congress, 75; Arthur C. Wade of Chautauqua, 53; George W. Aldridge of Monroe, 70; Francis Hendricks of Onondaga, 47; Henry J. Coggeshall of Oneida, 27; Azariah C. Brundage of Steuben, 26; Albert H. Shaw of Jefferson, 28.

Lexow Committee, "which Governor Flower has characterised as acts of perfidy and dishonour."

The adjournment of the State convention transferred the interest to New York City. The domination of organised crime under Tammany had become intolerable, and to secure a Mayor who would be uninfluenced by the selfish desire of promoting personal or partisan advantage, an exasperated public demanded a fusion of all anti-Tammany elements. As early as September 6 a great mass-meeting at Cooper Union, following the precedent which uprooted the Tweed frauds, had created another Committee of Seventy, and to complete the resemblance to its historic prototype of 1871, it chose the same chairman, Joseph Carocque, a Democrat and eminent attorney, whom it authorised to select his colleagues. This Committee held numerous conferences and canvassed many names. After much higgling John W. Goff, the brilliant counsel for the Lexow Committee, seemed to satisfy the real nonpartisan element. Goff, then forty-five years old, was a fragile Irishman, with narrow shoulders, a scholarly stoop, snow white hair, and deeply lined face. He had a mellow voice tinged with a brogue sufficient to give it a rare charm, while his rich profusion of words, with a rushing fluency and happy readiness of retort, gave him great prestige. But it was his work as an inquisitor for the Lexow Committee that brought him fame. His keen, subtle mind had full play, and his knack of revealing the sins of Tammany excited the deepest interest and marked him as the man of the hour. But his bold, relentless scrutiny did not please the lovers of the flesh-pots. Moreover, the Republican machine contended that as it must furnish a great proportion of the votes necessary to elect, a Republican should head the ticket.

To meet this manifestly fair suggestion the Committee finally presented the name of William L. Strong—little known outside the mercantile class. He possessed no ornamental characteristics. He was neither a trained speaker nor an oracle who prided himself upon his sagacity and

sought opportunity for exploiting theories of government; but he was a patient, agreeable, prosperous business man, and a bold, outspoken opponent of the city's plundering régime. Although he had not been tried in the fire of official responsibility and knew nothing of the finesse of machine methods, his friends believed that an honest man, with firmness and a desire to be fair, could enforce the laws and keep the city from being robbed. His principles in no wise differed from those of Nathan Straus, whom Tammany, in its dire distress, had nominated, and who, except for his connection with the Tiger, would probably have satisfied the anti-Tammany factions. But the latter finally accepted Strong and awaited the dilatory action of the Republicans. Platt had been ignored in the make-up of the Committee of Seventy and in the selection of the candidate for mayor. He also resented the activity of the press in demanding the immediate endorsement of Strong, whom he distrusted, since he belonged to the Committees of Thirty and of Seventy; companioned with Elihu Root, Cornelius N. Bliss, William Brookfield, and Charles S. Smith; favoured the reorganisation of the County committee; and disbelieved in bargains and deals. Nevertheless, with Morton's election pending, Platt dared not be too pugnacious, and having had Strong secretly interviewed he finally fell into line. So the candidate of the Committee of Seventy became the nominee for Mayor, with Goff on the ticket for Recorder. The next day Straus withdrew as Tammany's candidate. In an instant this event transformed the campaign from one of doubt to one of apparent certainty.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE STATE REPUDIATES HILL

1894

For several weeks before the Democratic State Convention met at Saratoga on September 26, it was an open secret that Edward Murphy and Richard Croker opposed Governor Flower's renomination. Like clay in the potter's hands he had already weakly yielded to the plans of others, who, after the crushing defeat of the preceding year, had no further use for him. The Governor's frequent complaints respecting official burdens indicated the feelings of an injured man forced into devious ways. "He has had very bad luck during his three years at Albany," remarked Senator Hill, sympathetically. His letter of withdrawal on the day after Levi P. Morton's nomination, therefore, surprised no one and gratified his party.

Ordinarily Governor Flower's action would have opened the way to the promotion of Lieutenant-Governor Sheehan. But no one suggested it, nor did Sheehan claim it. A strong sentiment existed to rid the party of persons responsible for its desperate situation, and one by one the dominating leaders passed into retirement. Senator Murphy gave up the chairmanship of the State Committee, and Richard Croker, laden with ill-gotten wealth, deemed it wise to drop into retirement. John Y. McKane had already entered the penitentiary, and to prepare the way for others, John W. Goff, the brilliant counsel of the Lexow Committee, kept on mercilessly grilling witnesses.

As the day neared for the State convention conditions became more gloomy. The party had been combed for a gubernatorial candidate. After the repeated refusals of David B. Hill, sentiment veered strongly to William J. Gaynor, whose flashlight rulings in the spectacular trial of McKane

had brought him into the sunlight. He was not a lovable man. Hot-headed and sometimes wrong-headed, with a brusque manner and a disposition to nurse resentment and watch uneasily the success of others who might become rivals, he had a troubled career. But his striking personality, vigorous temperament, blunt self-assertion, and penetrating legal acumen, made him a force to be reckoned with. In 1894, when his radical views respecting municipal reform attracted attention, people who had tired of Tammany began talking of him as a powerful champion to tackle the bosses, and in the search for a candidate for governor his name naturally touched a popular chord. Strangely enough Senator Hill approved it, and the *New York World* thought he "answered to the opportunity as no other candidate could," and "would make success fairly possible." It also answered to Gaynor's own ambition. He was not troubled with political timidity. He could speak his mind, defy bosses, and stage a new departure for his party. But something irked him. "Men who ought to be my friends do not quickly respond," he said, and in a moment of caprice he refused to become a candidate.

Perry Belmont had ambition, and the offer of a nomination gripped him hard. But his consent, like that of Gaynor, seemed to hang upon the words of a friend, and at the eleventh hour, upon the latter's advice, he rejected the tempting offer. Indeed, every one mentioned either declined or proved insufficient except John Boyd Thacher of Albany. Thacher was an accomplished gentleman, forceful, fearless and independent, with a liking for politics. He had served as mayor of his city and as a State senator, but for the past three years, while commissioner to the World's Fair at Chicago, he had managed to avoid all complicity in the disreputable schemes of the party leaders at Albany. Thus he retained friendly relations with President Cleveland and Senator Hill, and, if wanted, could acceptably represent both factions. The man whom the delegates preferred, however, was William C. Whitney, then on his way home from Europe.

The Hill leaders entertained grave doubts of his willingness to accept. They had ignored his advice respecting the snap convention, opposed his attitude toward Cleveland, seated the Dutchess senator over his protest, appointed Maynard against his wishes, and refused him the United States senatorship. Why should he pull them from a hole into which they had deliberately thrown themselves? Henry Adams said of him: "Whitney had finished with politics after having gratified every ambition, and swung the country almost at his will; he had thrown away the usual objects of political ambition like the ashes of smoked cigarettes; had turned to other amusements, satiated every taste, gorged every appetite, won every object that New York afforded, and, not yet satisfied, had carried his field of activity abroad, until New York no longer knew what most to envy, his horses or his houses."¹ Nevertheless, in their desperation the leaders determined to delay the gubernatorial nomination until after his arrival the next day.

Meantime the delegates elected Hill chairman amidst a wealth of applause that recalled more auspicious occasions, and then expectantly awaited his reasons for the hope within him. The Senator was never better prepared. A smile of confidence wreathed his face, and without a word of apology for the past or a sentence of doubt for the future, he warmed the hearts of his depressed hearers. "The unterrified Democracy assembled here to-day," he began, "is undismayed at the premature boasts and assumed confidence of our adversaries. We are not unaccustomed to their annual moss-covered game of political bluff, although renewed this year with extraordinary vehemence and unblushing effrontery. If vain boasting alone could bring victory, their battle is won before it is commenced. For twelve years they have assumed in August to do what we accomplished in November. Their unexpected victory last fall,—a victory which their astute leader humorously attributed to Divine Providence,—has turned their heads, apparently unmindful of the fact that

¹ *The Education of Henry Adams*, p. 347.

the total vote fell three hundred thousand short of a full State vote. With a united Democracy and a full vote New York is a Democratic State, and will this year, if we are true to ourselves, resume its place in the Democratic column." Momentary applause stopped him, but when he declared this "a time for conciliation, unity of purpose and progressive action," he struck a responsive chord which burst into a melody of approval as he added, slowly and with impressive emphasis, "the National and State administrations must alike be loyally supported." The wildest demonstration of the hour came, however, when he said: "The administration of President Cleveland has been clean-handed, economical, painstaking, and patriotic." This reference to something admittedly honest and economical acted upon the convention like the arrival of a life-boat to a shipwrecked crew, and hats waved, cheers rent the air, and people sprang to their feet, while the strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner," mingling with the enthusiasm, seemed to turn the assembly into a Brotherhood of Man meeting, with no resentments and no disloyalty. For the moment there appeared a vision of success.

Nevertheless, within half an hour the convention, contrary to the wishes of Hill, excluded the contesting delegations from New York and Brooklyn. "These delegates," said the *New York Times* (September 27), "fairly represent the vital force, the intelligence, and the capacity for growth of the Democratic party. To shut the door in their faces is to restrict the organised membership to the old State machine type, infertile and unprogressive. Thus the convention, begun in unusual helpfulness, ends in this act of incredible folly." To the friends of the President it recalled the policy of the snap-convention. "By this act," said Edward M. Shepard, "the Democratic State organisation says to us in Brooklyn that as a condition to admitting us we must pledge ourselves to support and defend every extremity of spoliation, which would be treason to every duty that a citizen owes to his community. It has repudiated

all for which we have stood, and pronounced as undemocratic the resolute determination of Judge Gaynor to deal with the corruption and incompetence which have eaten like a canker into the heart of our civilisation."² The *World* was no less severe. "It is reported that Senator Hill strongly favoured admitting the independent Democrats from New York and Brooklyn to seats in the convention. He was opposed by Murphy, Sheehan, and the Tammany delegations. These short-sighted Bourbons had their way, and recognition was denied to representatives of many thousand Democrats, among them some of the strongest and best known men in the party."³

Having disposed of undesirable delegations the convention closed the day's proceedings with the adoption of a platform.⁴ Talk of Whitney's probable decision continued until the next morning, when word came that he positively refused the proffered nomination. It left the delegates in despair. They had sought a new leader of promise or an old one with prestige, but they had only Thacher, whom Albany, on a call of counties, presented as solemnly as a Mason lays a twig of acacia upon the casket of a fellow-craftsman. At the call of Allegany, a pale young man, with handsome features and a clear, ringing voice, responded in a quiet, matter-of-fact way:⁵ "Allegany nominates David Bennett Hill!" For an instant the convention lapsed into a surprised silence; then, springing to its feet, it threw hats

² New York *World*, September 27, 1894.

³ *Ibid.*, September 28, 1894.

⁴ Besides the usual sumptuary, labour, and equal rights planks, it approved the Cleveland and Flower administrations, the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase and Federal election laws, and the Wilson Revenue Act except its income tax clause; congratulated the country upon the revival of business; charged the depression upon the McKinley Act; condemned the Constitutional Convention for its shameless partisanship; denounced the apportionment as a criminal gerrymander; and arraigned the Republican party for its unpardonable sins of omission and commission.

⁵ Elba Reynolds.

into the air and yelled itself hoarse, while Senator Hill, with knitted brow, shook his head and pounded the table. Conspicuously among the most noisy were Sheehan, Murphy, and other Hill leaders. On the restoration of partial order the Chairman thanked the delegates for their courtesy, adding with deeper emphasis, "but I cannot be your candidate again for governor." Then came Broome County with a similar response followed by a similar uproar. Chautauqua shouted the same answer. This advertised a novel but quickly understood plan of the leaders, each county as called making the same reply, accompanied by the same flurry of cheers. When the call reached New York Bourke Cockran, in a dramatic speech, declared it Hill's duty to accept. "The party has honoured him—and let him now serve the party," closing with a motion that the nomination be made by acclamation, which he declared carried. The Senator, however, coolly waved the action aside and ordered the roll-call continued, which proceeded as before, while half a dozen leaders gathered about, begging him to yield. The scene in all its startling features, except the weeping, recalled the nomination of Horatio Seymour for President in 1868. On the completion of the roll-call the Clerk, announcing 384 of the 385 votes for Hill, declared him the nominee of the convention. However, to avoid irregularity and the appearance of a stampede, Mayor Gilroy of New York moved another roll-call, which gave the same result. In the midst of the rejoicing the delegates finished their work, nominating by acclamation Daniel N. Lockwood of Buffalo for lieutenant-governor and William J. Gaynor of New York for judge of the Court of Appeals.

Although the simple prearranged plan of the leaders quickly disclosed itself, no one questioned the Senator's ignorance of its conception, or the sincerity of his repeated refusals. But had he anticipated the convention's action, he could have done no more to strengthen his candidacy. His readiness to accept Gaynor; his willingness to admit the New York and Brooklyn contesting delegations; his

eulogy of Cleveland; and his broad and in some respects admirable speech in which he pled for party unity, did much to conciliate.

It is doubtful if sincere, agreeable relations ever existed between the President and Senator. Hill's high, imperious spirit, seldom yielding and never bowing, could scarcely blend with Cleveland's deliberate, cool, set ways, with strong dislikes and stronger convictions. They differed, too, in character as much as in temperament. To this natural dissimilarity was added rivalry. In the Senate Hill had no equal in debate. Even the sledge-hammer blows of Tilman, the fiery South Carolinian, and the waspish stings of Chandler of New Hampshire, proved no match for the rapier thrusts of the New Yorker. Early in 1894 he gained much prominence in his contest with the President over the selection of an associate justice of the Supreme Court. Hill deeply resented the nomination of William B. Hornblower, claiming that it rewarded Hornblower's activity in the State Bar's investigation of Maynard, and he finally defeated the confirmation mainly through the friendliness of his colleagues and their personal dislike of Cleveland. The President then nominated Wheeler H. Peckham, an opponent, if not a personal enemy of the Senator, who accomplished his defeat on the ground of alleged unfitness.⁶

Nevertheless, during the spirited contest over the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and the revision of the Wilson tariff bill in the sessions of 1893 and 1894, the Senator's loyal support of the Administration attracted State-wide attention. He abounded in light, in intellectual interest, and in single-minded zeal for the common good. Finally, when half a dozen Senators made a personal attack upon the President,⁷ Hill became his champion. "I am not the de-

⁶ The President then nominated United States Senator Edward D. White of Louisiana, afterwards the distinguished Chief Justice, who was immediately confirmed.

⁷ Vest of Missouri, Gorman of Maryland, Jones of Arkansas, Voorhees of Indiana, Harris of Tennessee, and others.

fender of the President ordinarily," he said. "I have received no favours at his hands, as you and the country well know. I have my political grievances. I differ with him on interparty policy, especially on political matters in my own State. . . . But I think . . . in this particular it is my duty, and I am broad-minded and liberal enough to defend him when he is unjustly attacked."

The speech that followed indicated the perfect sobriety and self-control proper to statesmen. He vindicated the necessity and the fundamental consistency of the President's action, declaring the opposition a partisan denunciation of a practical policy, in what was then a serious, if not a crucial matter to the party. In closing he used Shakespeare's well-known play with finished skill. "I am reminded how, years ago, a senatorial cabal conspired to assassinate the great Roman Emperor. If I were disposed to make comparisons, I might speak of the distinguished Senator from Maryland as the 'lean and hungry Cassius.' You recollect what Cæsar said of him: 'He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.' I might speak of the Senator from Arkansas as Marcus Brutus—'Honest Brutus' . . . Casca was the Senator who struck the first blow last Friday. Trebonius, the Senator from Indiana—testy, probably a little petulant—'good Trebonius.' Metellus Cimber, the distinguished Senator from Tennessee. . . . When yesterday they stabbed at our President and sought to strike him down, they made the same plea as did the conspirators of old, that they struck for Rome—for their country. They said they did it not that they loved Cæsar less, but that they loved Rome more; not that they loved the President less, but they loved their party and this Senate Bill more. I can say with Mark Antony:

'What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it; they are wise and honourable.'

Although the personal relations of the President and Senator remained unchanged, a similarity of views upon ques-

tions of deep concern to the country and to their party had brought them into an active sympathy which gave the Senator's convention speech a ring of genuine sincerity, and in its desire to be loyal a tendency appeared in the so-called Cleveland press to overlook the past and accept his broader views as the result of senatorial experience. The *World* spoke of his growth in the public estimate of his capacity, and the Brooklyn *Eagle* thought him an instrument of power for carrying out the policy of conciliation and party unity. Encouragement also came in a telegram from the President. "No doubt the convention has done the best thing possible," it said; "I think those who were there ought to understand the situation and know what was suitable to do. I have confidence that their best judgment was exercised."⁸

The independent journals, however, refused to be reconciled. "This is not politics," said the *New York Times* (September 27). "It is madness. In 1891 a great public crime was committed, and when an agent in the commission of it came before the people at the election last year, he was defeated by more than 100,000 votes, although a candidate of the more numerous party. If a mere agent in the villainy was punished with such severity, how will the electors treat the principal? Hill was the arch-conspirator three years ago. Is it assumed that the people have forgotten the theft of the Senate?" Even the *World* could not conceal its surprise at "the audacious daring of Senator Hill in defying so many obvious difficulties and taking such evident chances of defeat."

Gaynor's nomination had been thrown to the Senator as a life-preserver. The convention had repudiated his principles, refused to seat his delegates, and then, to strengthen Hill, to appease the rebellious, and to close Gaynor's mouth, it named him for judge of the Court of Appeals. The *World* thought him "the logical candidate for the head, not the tail of the ticket." Edward M. Shepard called it "an insult,"

⁸ *New York World*, September 27, 1894.

and Gaynor himself was not happy. He wanted to help Hill, "whose recent development in the Senate," he said, "satisfied every one that he is a very able man";⁹ but in a campaign for sweeping reforms such as he had intended making it, how could he remain silent as usage required of a candidate for judicial office? So he refused to accept (October 7).¹⁰ After the convention adjourned Hill had begged the State Committee to substitute another, and he now urged that Gaynor be put in his place. But Murphy refused, adding: "You run in the fat years and now you must take your chance in the lean year." Thereupon the State Democracy, representing the rejected Brooklyn and New York delegates, nominated for governor Everett P. Wheeler, three years the senior of Senator Hill. Wheeler was never silent and never unscrupulous. Although occasionally arrogant and rarely inclined to self-abnegation, his high character for ability and courage gave him great prestige. He was eminent as a lawyer, and his activities in every cause that seemed to make for civic betterment kept him on the skirmish line of reforms. He did not expect to gain office. His deft finger had too often touched the shortcomings of men. But his nomination afforded his supporters an opportunity of showing Tammany their teeth.

Senator Hill also suffered by the withdrawal of Nathan Straus, whom Tammany had nominated for Mayor. Straus was not a doctrinaire. A wealthy, prosperous merchant of sound business methods, he devoted all the powers of a broad, clear mind and a dogged will to the success of his various activities, and although a loyal Democrat, deeply interested in municipal affairs, he never companioned with the Tammany leaders. But just then they needed a candidate whom the people profoundly respected, and his systematic, generous aid furnished to the deserving and helpless poor, especially during the preceding panic winter, had

⁹ *New York World*, September 27, 1894.

¹⁰ In place of Gaynor the State Committee named Charles Brown of Newburg, a justice of the Supreme Court.

made his name a choice household word. His acceptance of the nomination indicated his business character. "If elected," he said, "I shall conduct the office as I do my business. Political influence will not keep an unfit man in office. My administration will be strictly non-partisan, but I won't appoint any enemy of the Democracy until good Democrats are exhausted. I am heartily in favour of the work of the Lexow Committee." This bold, frank statement attracted the sympathetic attention of anti-Tammany organisations, but the fear of the Tiger, with whom Straus would be caged, finally drove them to the support of William L. Strong, the Republican nominee, since the manner of his selection seemed to offer a more open way to needed reforms. So Straus, like Gaynor, withdrew, and Tammany substituted Hugh J. Grant, who, in obedience to Croker, had turned the city's offices over to a parcel of venal politicians.

As the campaign advanced the Democratic press in the country-at-large showed slight respect and no enthusiasm. "The triumph of the Republican party in New York," said the *Baltimore News* (October 15), "is of no moment whatever to true Democrats in comparison to the urgent necessity for the defeat of Hill and Hillism." Other party papers expressed similiar sentiments. A more harrowing discouragement sourced in the daily disclosures of the Lexow Committee, which staggered readers accustomed to hear of ordinary grafting. A reopening of Hill's part in the Aqueduct scandal of 1885 increased the tension. To the oft-reiterated charge that he inspired Maynard's nomination he made no answer, although Maynard returned his letter of October 4 "for such use as in your judgment may be most advisable."¹¹ "His course in this instance," said Alton B. Parker, "was in line with his settled policy not to answer those who misrepresented him, or accused him of doing that which he ought not to have done or leaving undone that which he ought to have done." Judge Parker adds: "I am of the opinion that it would have been the part of wisdom to have

¹¹ See p. 199.

occasionally strangled the libels his enemies created to his injury." ¹²

If the Senator in private wore the air and manner of discouragement, on the rostrum he boldly faced his opponents, repeating the witty and sarcastic arguments that had done duty in former campaigns. He dwelt upon Platt's advocacy of Morton's nomination, and prophesied that if elected he would be "Platt's tool." This was Morton's weak spot, which so disturbed his party that when Platt ostentatiously presumed to reply, several leading Republican journals warned him to keep out of sight if he desired to render a real service.

But Republican disaffection was destined to have little influence in the coming election. The ceaseless cry of "hard times" that sourced in the lack of employment, had changed the slack-water campaign of 1892 into a flowing Republican tide, and in vigorous, enthusiastic speeches the Republicans stressed protection and Hill's record. Of their speakers Governor McKinley of Ohio, who evinced a peculiar capacity for explaining the protective system, sounded the keynote in Buffalo. It had, at last, gripped the leaders that the distress of the masses, due to industrial and economic conditions, presented the winning argument, and wherever McKinley spoke in New York the evidence of a Republican victory became more apparent. When it came, therefore, it produced less surprise than did the result in 1893, but the magnitude of the pluralities thrilled Republicans and paralysed Democrats. ¹³

¹² *Eulogy of Hill*, pp. 22, 23.

¹³ Morton's plurality, 156,108; Saxton's, 127,483. Hill's plurality in New York City (1894), 2,549. Flower's plurality in New York City (1891), 59,512. Cleveland's plurality in New York City (1892), 76,300. Legislature: Senate, Reps. 18, Dems. 14; Assembly, Reps. 107, Dems. 21. William R. Strong, Mayor, plurality, 42,617. John W. Goff, Recorder, plurality, 49,037.

Total vote—Republican, Morton, 673,818; Hill, 517,710; State Democracy, Wheeler, 27,202; Prohibition, Baldwin, 23,525; Populist, Matthews, 110,495; Social Labour, Matchett, 15,868.

It was needless to analyse the figures. As the Republican sweep was country-wide, the influences causing it accounted in part, at least, for Morton's great plurality. It seemed certain, too, that Lockwood's vote in excess of Hill's (28,605) was largely due to Wheeler's vote (27,202) which had gone to Lockwood.

It is doubtful if Hill ever felt the real danger, although warned in advance. To be elected under such conditions stirred his pride. He had never been beaten by the people, and like the pilot who had steered his boat with marvellous skill through changing channels and threatening snags, he believed he could avoid them again. Nor did he ever despair. His audiences exceeded those in former campaigns. "Although many come to see the man with hoofs and horns of whom they read," he said, "I meet with much enthusiasm—more than ever before." On Sunday before election day he talked with a confidence that often, perhaps, possesses candidates apparently unable to sense a situation as others realise it. But on election evening, sitting with Governor Flower and others in the Executive Chamber, hearing the unexpected returns, he seemed crushed. Finally, when New York City reported only twenty-five hundred, which had given President Cleveland seventy-five thousand two years before, he rose to go, saying his carriage waited for him. Just then the Governor disclosed a table laden with refreshments. Hill took a cup of coffee, made a few semi-humorous remarks, and proposed a toast to "Governor-elect Morton." Then, saying "Good night," he left the room. As he passed out a messenger handed him a telegram from the employés of the United States Senate, reading: "Whether in victory or defeat, the Democracy of the country is at your feet."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PLATT-STRONG WAR

1895

WHEN the Legislature convened in January, 1895, George R. Malby and Hamilton Fish represented the rival Republican factions for Speaker of the Assembly. The former had pliantly served Platt in that capacity during the preceding session and he now naturally relied upon him for support. It soon transpired, however, that an increased independent element, strengthened by eleven members from New York City, loomed large as the fog lifted, while Platt, uneasy respecting the availability of Malby, turned for counsel to Louis F. Payn, who advised an immediate alliance with Fish.

Although Payn played between party lines as his personal interests seemed to indicate, his tergiversations never lessened the confidence or aroused the suspicions of the former Senator. The boldness of this suggestion, however, staggered him. For years Fish had been a bitter, if not an effective opponent, and to rely upon or even to treat with him seemed unthinkable. But Payn knew the man, and his forceful personality and overpowering assurance soon convinced the alarmed boss of the wisdom of the move. In due time Fish snapped the Payn bait with as much alacrity as Platt swallowed Fish. It was agreed, however, that Platt must keep in the background, while Payn, in his own deft way, transferred the trusted Platt supporters from Malby to Fish. He did this so diplomatically that Malby himself, in his statement the night before the party caucus, betrayed complete ignorance of the situation. "I have now actually supporting me," he said, "a majority of the caucus." The next day, however, Fish had 73 votes to Malby's 22, Danforth E. Ainsworth, floor leader in the preceding Assem-

bly, receiving 6. Malby thought it "a shady political trick," and several Republican journals hailed it as an anti-Platt victory, but Platt, neither then nor afterwards, had reason to regret Fish's election.¹

It was otherwise with the election of William L. Strong. The Mayor not only believed in reform, but held that its accomplishment centred in the character of the men selected to bring it about, and after the Legislature had authorised the Mayor to make removals he exercised his own judgment in choosing appointees, while Platt, claiming to have tied him up with pre-election promises, demanded a "share of the spoils." Nevertheless, Strong continued to remove and appoint, making William Brookfield commissioner of public works, Theodore Roosevelt chief police commissioner, Francis M. Scott, an anti-Tammany Democrat, corporation counsel, and George F. Waring head of the street cleaning department. The excellence of these appointments could not be denied, but he had shown slight courtesy to the Platt faction. If it seemed necessary in the interest of real reform, as it doubtless was, to remove Police Commissioners Murray and Kerwin, the Republican members of the bi-partisan board, whom Platt understood would be retained, the Mayor could easily have avoided selecting Brookfield, whose unfriendly relations with the former Senator were notorious.² This appointment, whether Strong so intended or not, plainly indicated to outside observers a desire publicly to snub Platt—a rudeness that naturally offended his co-operating friends throughout the State. This opened the so-called "Platt-Strong War." In resentment Platt substituted Edward Lauterback for Brookfield as chairman of the Republican County Committee. He also determined to hold up all legislation that would give the Mayor additional patronage. This scheme, when put into practice, deeply stirred the

¹ Platt, *Autobiography*, pp. 512-13.

² Platt had suggested Fred D. Grant, son of the famous General, to whom the Mayor did not offer any objections. But at the eleventh hour the Mayor named Brookfield and appointed Grant a police commissioner.

Metropolitan press, since it involved several most important reform measures, notably the abolition of twelve Tammany police justices, the creation of a city magistrate's court, the removal of legal real-estate sales from the control of Richard Croker, and the reconstruction of the public school system, against none of which as remedies for notorious evils did any venture a word of criticism. Their enactment into law, the friends of reform believed, would render it impossible again to restore existing conditions in these important branches of municipal administration; and to force their passage over Platt's "get even" policy, precipitated a contest more bitter than that of the preceding session. The city press with few exceptions fiercely attacked Platt and the Albany legislators, while the Committee of Seventy, responsible for the selection of Mayor Strong, again invoked the aid of great assemblages of public-spirited citizens, which, in the preceding autumn, had created an uprising that amounted to a political revolution. The best-known speakers responded to their call. Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst delighted the great audiences with his witty disclosure of Platt's methods; James C. Carter spoke frequently; and Elihu Root, then as later, fearlessly revealed the necessity for reform. Speaking of the bill to remove legal real-estate sales from the control of Richard Croker, Root declared that "In my judgment every honest Republican in the Senate, without regard to faction, will vote for that measure, and if you find any one of those eighteen voting against it, it will be because he is bought."³ Root also issued an address asking his fellow Republicans of the State to urge their senators to pass the city's reform measures.

To offset the influence of his critics, whose attacks multiplied with increasing fervour, Platt issued a confidential letter to friendly editors of the up-state press, enclosing a characteristic "statement of facts" to be used editorially. "Just at this time," it said, "the discordant noise of faction is heard in the City of New York. It comes from that

³ *New York Post*, April 5.

element in the Saratoga convention who opposed the nomination of Governor Morton. Their noise was disproportionate to their numbers, but now they are serving notice on the party that, unless they have their way, they will raise the mischief. The objective point of their attack is Ex-Senator Platt. They do not seem to differ with him on material questions of policy. Their quarrel is that he exists. They say he is trying to dictate. They give notice of war upon everybody friendly to him. Their factional outcry has no reference to any plan advocated by Senator Platt. With his usual frankness and directness he has declared in favour of all reforms that public sentiment in New York City approves. Still they keep up their silly cry about "bossism," and finding no support among Republicans for their evil course, they seem to be making lines with those Mugwumps and Democrats who supported the Republican ticket in the last campaign. They are alive to the fact that the present situation may give them a partisan advantage. They are clamorous about their relation to the Republican victory, asserting that they did it all. The excellent Dr. Parkhurst issues daily bulletins that he was the great author of Republican success. The Committee of Seventy are equally impressed with their importance, talking about 'our victory,' 'our fight.' They are now manufacturing proposed legislation, have appointed a committee on legislation to boss Republican officials at Albany, and a committee on finance with functions not yet quite discernible.

"Senator Platt has had the courage to speak out boldly against such self-constituted committees of overzealous individuals. Mr. Platt's declaration has the unqualified support of the Republican party from one end of the State to the other, and yet the Republican factionists in New York City are making it the basis of a new outcry. . . . Mr. Platt's success as a leader is due to the fact that he understands the Republican voters. They will take his advice but not dictation. The Republican legislators at Albany will do their own thinking and voting. The Republican factionists

in New York City must not be permitted to injure the Republican party. They must be taught that Republicans of the State have no sympathy with them. Senator Platt does not ask any one to fight his battles. He has frankly declared that he is not a candidate for public office now or in prospective. He can doubtless take care of himself. His disclosed policies are entirely in line with the interests of the party and to make war upon him at this time is to do what is unfair and generally injurious. He is not going to evaporate at the bidding of jealous factionists, nor is there any reason why he should. His friends throughout the State are numerous and strong, and their human nature is like other people's. When they are attacked they resent it. They are working for the benefit of the party, and through the party for the benefit of the public." ⁴ To his letter he added: "You may be sure I shall appreciate all you do." ⁵

This statement, very usable for ready-made editorials, appeared in part or in whole in many up-state journals, which the former Senator republished in the form of an attractive brochure, copies being carefully distributed to members of the Legislature. Nevertheless, several discordant notes came from various sections outside of the Metropolis, which did not appear in Platt's pamphlet. The *Elmira Advertiser*, controlled by Fassett, said (February 23): "The countrymen were highly displeased by reports tending to convey the impression that Mayor Strong had been betraying the party; but when the facts, one by one, came out, the heat disappeared. The Mayor will go on keeping his anti-election promises." The *Buffalo Express* (February 14) spoke its mind. "Several times when Platt's arrogance has led him into such tight places as this, he has saved himself for future mischief by pleading for party harmony. Now is the time to wipe out Platt. Better have the struggle over

⁴ *New York Evening Post*, December 11, 1894.

⁵ The *Buffalo Express* of January 2, 1895, published a partial list of the Republican papers, whose editors benefited by appointments to office.

now than defer it till next year." The *Hudson Republican* and *Buffalo Commercial* showed a similar spirit.

Meantime the great mass-meetings kept pounding away. The fact that they represented the trade, the commerce, and the industry of the great Metropolis had a decided influence upon the legislators. Although Mayor Strong, in his treatment of the former Senator, had exhibited a lack of tact, many assemblymen and not a few senators showed by their action that they believed it unwise to allow a personal quarrel to deprive New York City of the fruits of its great victory. Nor was the Governor less affected. His two predecessors, Governors Hill and Flower, seldom exchanged views respecting legislation of interest to the city with others than those belonging to the Tammany order; but for years Governor Morton had held an honourable position in social and business circles, associating with the people who made the better public sentiment. He knew somewhat intimately the men, who, standing for good citizenship, now fervently voiced the need of reform, and that he should prefer their advice to that of the Gibbses, the Pattersons, and the Worths, who simply obeyed the orders of Platt, naturally kept the latter on the anxious seat.

To strengthen his hold upon the Governor, therefore, Platt filled him with an ambition to be President. His plurality did not bulk so large as Governor Cleveland's in 1882, but the defeat of Hill in 1894 had been more disastrous to his party than the failure of Folger. In 1895, therefore, Platt could truthfully size up the situation as favourable to Morton's selection as a candidate for President, and whenever the Governor hesitated to do his bidding, Platt alarmed him by feigning discouragement and demoralisation. "It makes me wonder," he once wrote, "what would be the result if you succeed in becoming President."⁶ A few months later when the Governor indicated an unfriendly attitude, Platt wrote again: "If you are to persist in the policy which you have outlined, we might as well quit right

⁶ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 308.

where we are; but I assure you that you will be the greater sufferer from such cowardly policy. In such case I will not feel like taking off my coat and doing the work I contemplated doing in the Presidential matter.”⁷

That such prodding, exasperatingly humiliating as it must have been to the Governor, had its influence, the most unobserving could not fail to note. The appointment of George W. Aldridge of Monroe to be commissioner of public works, the most influential office in the State, recalled Governor Cleveland’s regard for Hubert O. Thompson, forced by the insistence of Daniel Manning. The appointment of Jacob Patterson for quarantine commissioner likewise indicated a desire to please the lower Broadway chief. In fact, all of the Governor’s appointees with the exception of Silas W. Burt, whom the Senate refused to confirm as a civil service commissioner, strengthened the Platt organisation. Nevertheless, the credit for much of the reform legislation that finally passed was largely due to the Governor’s honest purpose and determined will. Early in the session he refused to humiliate Mayor Strong by approving a bi-partisan police measure which transferred to the Governor (himself) the power of appointing a commission to reorganise the police force. By vetoing a bi-partisan police bill for West Troy, in which Platt revived an old scheme of Tweed’s, he served notice that he would not perpetuate the bi-partisan evil in New York City. With equal spirit the Governor recommended the early passage of the bills creating a City Magistrate’s Court and reorganising the police department. It required even greater nerve to veto a bill drawn in Jacob Worth’s interest, which substituted for the then existing board, having charge of Kings County’s charitable and correctional institutions, a single commissioner to be selected by the sheriff and two other friends of Worth’s own type. It revealed the character of the sheriff in question that the Court denied him the custody of the McKane jury because of his friendship for the defendant.

⁷ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 309.

Although the passage of several important measures had thus been forced, neither the Governor nor the influence of press and mass-meetings could dislodge the bill reorganising the public school system. The Assembly passed it, and a word from Platt would have made it law; but he again controlled the Senate through the three members who had blocked reform legislation in the preceding winter.⁸ When this became manifest the New York *Tribune* called upon Chauncey M. Depew to take the lead in an uprising, "since only by an impressive State-wide demonstration could the party escape the responsibility of acquiescing in Platt's ownership of the party."

Depew declined the job, but after the Legislature adjourned factional contests sprang up throughout the State, in one of which J. Sloat Fassett, who had shown symptoms of revolt through the *Elmira Advertiser*, won in a clearly defined anti-Platt fight. In most districts, however, the opposition failed.⁹ Yet the State convention which as-

⁸ Senators Coggeshall of Oneida, O'Connor of Broome, and Lexow of Rockland.

⁹ Of the character of such opposition, Theodore Roosevelt said: "Its leadership was apt to be found only among those whom Abraham Lincoln called the 'silk stockings.' . . . They really disliked him (Platt) and his methods for æsthetic rather than moral reasons. . . . They had not the slightest understanding of the needs, interests, ways of thought, and convictions of the average small man. . . . They usually put up either some rather inefficient, well-meaning person, whose only good point was 'respectability,' and who knew nothing of the great fundamental questions looming before us; or else they put up some big business man or corporation lawyer who was wedded to the gross wrong or injustice of our economic system, and who neither by personality nor by programme gave the ordinary plain people any belief that there was promise of vital good to them in the change. I knew both the machine and the silk stocking reformers. The machine as such had no ideals, although many of the men composing it did have. The ideals of many of the silk stocking reformers did not relate to the questions of real and vital interest to our people; and, singularly enough, in international matters, these same silk stockings were no more to be trusted than the average ignorant demagogue or short-sighted spoils politician." Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, pp. 302-3.

sembled at Saratoga (September 17) demonstrated that Platt could not control adversely to the interests of up-state delegates. They desired the renomination of the State officials elected in 1893, because of their creditable records,¹⁰ and willingly allowed Platt to name Celora S. Martin of Broome for judge of the Court of Appeals.¹¹ Nor did they object to his boxing Fassett's ears by making John F. Parkhurst of Steuben a member of the State Committee. The endorsement of Governor Morton's administration and the presentation of his name as its choice for President likewise provoked no open opposition. But when Hamilton Fish presented a platform ignoring the Sunday liquor laws, which Theodore Roosevelt, Mayor Strong's disturbing police commissioner, had enforced with the courage that guided his conduct as President Harrison's civil service commissioner, opposition began. For years the saloons had avoided these laws by locking the front door and opening a side door. Roosevelt locked both doors. Thereupon the saloon-keepers, backed by the thirsty crowds, finding the sturdy Commissioner as remorseless as a zealot, insisted upon State relief. Platt declared it a local issue that did not require State legislation, or any action by the State convention. In the committee on resolutions, however, an angry discussion had occurred, the up-state delegates contending that the representatives of a great party could not afford to withhold its endorsement of the maintenance of the Sunday laws. It appealed to them as a moral issue of State-wide importance. Nevertheless, a majority of the Committee accepted the Platt view, and when Fish concluded reading the resolutions the business seemed to be ended. But suddenly, without notice, Warner Miller submitted an amendment favouring "the maintenance of the Sunday laws in the interest of labour and of morality," following it with an appeal which deeply moved the delegates. It recalled his forceful speech

¹⁰ See list of candidates, p. 201.

¹¹ One ballot resulted as follows: Martin, 395; Jesse Johnson, Kings, 223; Pardon S. Williams, Jefferson, 124; Henry A. Childs, Orleans, 16.

on the liquor question in 1888, and now as then its supporters came largely from country districts upon whom Platt relied for his control. This meant surrender or defeat, and to escape the latter he quickly announced an acceptance of the amendment.¹²

This surrender seemed to break the iron-sway, and on motion of Lieutenant-Governor Saxton the convention, by unanimous consent, heard J. Sloat Fassett on the question of enlarging the State Committee. Fassett's irritation at Platt's treatment in the preceding year had been stimulated by the latter's more recent effort to defeat him as a delegate, and the anti-Platt managers, among them George B. Sloan, C. H. T. Collin, S. V. R. Crugar, and former Speaker Sheard, at once put him forward as a possible leader of the opposition. On his appearance before the convention, therefore, he received a very cordial welcome. It seemed the critical moment. The Sunday resolution had raised a hope that Fassett might sufficiently arouse the latent dislike of existing conditions to secure a larger council, more representative of the people's aspirations and more likely to remove their resentment at the polls. The convention listened respectfully, but a loud adverse vote showed that the majority, so long as it could have its way by compelling Platt to accept what it wanted, had no need of the proposed innovation.

¹² The platform reaffirmed the policy of protection; denounced the Wilson tariff act and the Cleveland administration; welcomed the dawn of returning prosperity; favoured "the maintenance of a National currency, every dollar of which, whether in gold, silver, or paper notes, shall be of equal value"; declared "unalterable opposition to the free and unlimited coinage of silver"; endorsed the work of the Constitutional Convention, of the Legislature, and of Gov. Morton's administration; and demanded the maintenance of the Sunday liquor laws.

CHAPTER XXV

ROOSEVELT AND TAMMANY

1895

THE action of the Republican State convention respecting the Sunday liquor laws encouraged the Democrats. Roosevelt declared that the performance of his duty as police commissioner did not permit his questioning the wisdom of the laws or the political effect of their enforcement, while the Miller amendment, adopted by the convention, practically extinguished hope of relief from a Republican legislature. This precluded any change in existing conditions. In resentment four-fifths of the German-American vote threatened to secede, and by the time the Democratic State convention met at Syracuse (September 24) the promised revolt had become thoroughly organised.

Meanwhile efforts to reunite the party had been unremitting. Senator Hill had taken his defeat with characteristic composure. He regarded it due to the country-wide slump, and with undiminished courage he assumed the undisputed leadership of his party, seeking not only to make a real peace between the belligerent factions in New York and Brooklyn, but by co-operating with Lamont, then secretary of war, to secure a thoroughly united party. Lamont had long been recognised as the astute politician of the Administration. He had none of Whitney's genius for spirited leadership, and lacked Manning's keen sense of what is real; but his instinct to establish friendly and intimate relations with men, and patiently, with courtesy and good humour, to control them without giving up too much in an atmosphere of friendship, became a passion which brought practical results. This was evidenced by the presence at the convention of the State Democracy, the Shepard Democracy, and representatives of other independent bodies. To cement the union

loud applause greeted every mention of the President. It added to the harmony, also, that the platform, taking full advantage of the Roosevelt policy, left the observance of the Sabbath to be fixed by each community.¹

The Committee on Credentials also preserved the harmony by reporting a division of the delegates from Kings and Queens Counties satisfactory to the Shepard Democracy of Brooklyn. But when it gave the State Democracy only twenty-one votes to Tammany's eighty-four, with authority to the latter to appoint the election inspectors and to use the party emblem, all harmony suddenly disappeared. Immediately Charles J. Patterson, a member of the Shepard Democracy, presented an amendment giving the State Democracy thirty-five delegates and four State committeemen, and Tammany seventy delegates and twelve State committeemen.

Thus far Senator Hill had promoted harmony. He had pleased the Administration by picking Belmont, a recognised friend of the President, for temporary chairman; tactfully excluded any reference to the then disturbing "third term" question, which the President's sound money views had raised; and graciously substituted Horatio C. King of Brooklyn for secretary of state in place of John Boyd Thacher of Albany. With equal willingness he accepted for state treasurer Norton Chase of Albany, likewise agreeable to the White House. In the same spirit of conciliation the Senator's slate included Daniel G. Griffin of Jefferson for attorney-general, whose neighbourly friendship for former Governor Flower betrayed his only connection with the ruling faction, while a manifest aversion to Augustus Scheu of Buffalo, a devoted lieutenant of Sheehan, who sought the

¹ Among other things the platform declared for home-rule; economy in public expenditures; honesty in public office; honesty in elections; honest reform in the civil service; equal taxation; individual liberty; federal taxation for revenue only; and "sound money, gold and silver the only legal tender; no currency not convertible into coin; gradual retirement and extinction of the greenback; no free and unlimited coinage of silver."

office of comptroller, had made it plain that he proposed excluding bitter partisans from the ticket. His professed desire to give the State Democracy a fair division of the New York delegates further evinced his purpose to destroy factionalism. In fact, his action produced the impression that an understanding existed with Secretary of War Lamont to create a New Democracy to meet the new conditions likely to arise at the Presidential convention in the following year (1896). It certainly could not be denied that in seeking a common ground upon which the party could stand Hill's programme showed Lamont's temperament. It was without cunning or indirection; could give no offence; did not overlook the little matters; and appealed strongly to the fair-minded.

Even so, Murphy and Sheehan were untouched. They proclaimed their desire for harmony as a necessary policy, but they resented the ostracism of their favourite supporters, and opposed giving any delegates to the State Democracy which had cast its votes in the preceding year for Wheeler, calling them "traitors" who should first show repentance by their attitude in the pending campaign. Thus they began sowing tares among the delegates, voicing the opinion that Roosevelt's enforcement of the Sunday laws would itself rehabilitate Tammany and force a union of the party throughout the State. However, "in the interests of harmony" they would accept the report of the Committee on Credentials.

It was otherwise with the State Democracy. In the speech backing his resolution for fourteen additional delegates, Patterson defended their course in the preceding election by reciting conditions shown by the Lexow Committee, and recalling the crimes practised in the elections of 1893 and of 1894. "If there is to be harmony and no kick on the day of the next election," he said, "it must be obtained now by fair dealing." Thomas F. Grady, representing Tammany, replied to Patterson in a forceful, not ill-natured speech, which reduced the question to one of expediency rather than of right. To grant forgiveness to a rebellious people on

any terms belonged to the category of generosity, and he thought one vote in five very liberal. This closed the debate. Nevertheless, as the convention voted on the proposed amendment the Cleveland delegates made strong personal appeals to their colleagues not to allow the small selfishness of local interests to endanger party success. The Murphy-Sheehan opposition, however, defeated its adoption, and by a similar vote the majority report became the accepted rule. Thereupon Charles S. Fairchild, Wheeler H. Peckham, Everett P. Wheeler, and other representatives of the State Democracy rose with dignity and slowly left the hall amidst the hisses of Tammany and the applause of the Shepard Democracy.

The secession fell like a pall upon the convention. Hill had taken no part in the controversy. In his talk with Murphy he favoured "a fair division," and his presence and silence when the committee adopted its report of 21 to 84 left the impression that he accepted it as fair. But he was entirely unprepared for such a denouement. It was ungracious; it lowered the legitimate spirit of party to the nameless spirit of faction; and it discouraged the candidates. No sooner had the delegation left the hall than Daniel G. Griffin, slated for attorney-general, immediately withdrew, while Wilson S. Bissell of Buffalo, until recently a member of the Cabinet, resenting Sheehan's treatment, refused to present Augustus Schen as a candidate for comptroller. Albeit, Hill hurriedly revised his slate, putting up Norton Chase for attorney-general and DeWitt Clinton Dow, who had sought no office, for treasurer. Each person thus proposed became the accepted candidate without contest,² and the convention melted away without a parting cheer.

Interest in the campaign, as in the preceding year, centred in New York City, with Theodore Roosevelt as the star performer. Although it very early became manifest

² The candidates were as follows: Secretary of State, Horatio C. King, Kings; Comptroller, John B. Judson, Fulton; Treasurer, DeWitt Clinton Dow, Schoharie; Atty.-Gen., Norton Chase, Albany; Engineer, Russell R. Stuart, Onondaga; Court of Appeals, John D. Teller, Cayuga.

that his rigid enforcement of the Sunday laws threatened to defeat the fusion ticket, which again opposed Tammany, he did not flinch. Nor was he satisfied with quietly enforcing the unpopular law. He seemed rather to delight in taking advantage of this opportunity to get back into New York politics with which his prolonged absence in Washington as a civil service commissioner had put him completely out of touch, and accordingly he not only advertised his intentions as a police commissioner, but exploited his views respecting the Government's foreign policy, the administration of the Navy, the duty of his party, the next Presidential election, and the state of international law. His speeches of that period are especially interesting as illustrative of political capacity, but they provoked bitter resentment. Politicians sneered and the press criticised. "We have had far too much of Roosevelt during the last six months," said the New York *Evening Post* (November 7). "He produces an impression of youthfulness, which has always been Roosevelt's greatest impediment." Outwardly Roosevelt enjoyed their cartoons and laughed at their slurs; but the more they held him responsible for driving Republicans to the fold of Tammany the more exasperating his language became. Indeed, it would have been surprising, judged by his later career, if he had not resorted to every weapon in his unrivalled rhetorical armory to discredit the policy of permitting a wrong that had debauched the police and profaned the American Sabbath. "If you don't like it," he said, "amend the law. There can be no true reform without sincerity of purpose." This spirit amazed if it did not anger people. "Has he the fortitude," asked the New York *Times* (November 6), "to pursue a course that is clearly unpopular in this city, and that men of very great influence in his own party would like to see abandoned?"

Roosevelt had exhibited what the ordinary politicians called "reckless courage" when waging war in the Assembly against the forces of corruption, but the first year of his police commissionership must be taken as the date when he

established his "fortitude." Writing at this time to Mrs. Admiral Cowles, his sister, then in England, he said: "In the New York political world just at present every man's hand is against me; every politician and every editor; and I live in a welter of small intrigue. . . . I work—and fight!—from dawn until dusk, almost; and the difficulties, the opposition and lukewarm support I encounter, give me hours of profound depression. It is a grimy struggle, but a vital one. . . . All day I strive to push matters along; to keep on good terms with the Mayor, while rejecting his advice and refusing to obey his orders; not to be drawn into a personal quarrel with Platt; not to let my colleagues split either among themselves or with me; to work with reformers, and yet not let them run away with the department." A little later, he added: "It is inconceivably arduous, disheartening and irritating, beyond almost all other work of the kind. . . . I have to contend with the hostility of the political machines; I have to contend with the folly of the reformers and the indifference of decent citizens. The work itself is hard, worrying, and often disagreeable. . . . But the battle for decent government must be won by just such interminable, grimy drudgery."

No one, perhaps, was more convinced than Roosevelt that only a strict observance of the law could destroy the corrupting influence of Tammany. Other men, with as good conscience, who desired reform as much as he, thought it wiser to defeat Tammany than to persist in a policy which must return to power the corrupt gang that had looted the city for a decade and had so recently been ejected. Indeed, it is not certain, judging by the letters to his sister, that Roosevelt was not sometimes for a moment disturbed by the suspicion that he might unawares be making a mistake.

The President did not seem deeply interested. For two years he had taken little interest publicly in Hill's campaigns, indicating a disinclination to surrender to a political connection in which his own judgment was not allowed to count for anything. To one of his integrity the theft of a

State senator and the appointment of Maynard to the Court of Appeals had been revolting, and he refused assent to the old political saying “when bad men combine, the good must associate.” Even the efforts of Hill and Lamont to create a New Democracy had not produced a situation where men were bound together by common opinions, common affections, and common interests, and as the campaign progressed, the President, greatly to the disappointment of the party leaders, maintained his silence. But the declaration of the platform opposing the free and unlimited coinage of silver, and the tactful appeal of Lamont, finally stirred him to action, and in a telegram to Charles Tracy, chairman of a meeting held at Albany on October 30, he conveyed to his Albany friends and former neighbours “my cordial congratulations on the wise and patriotic declarations of their State platform concerning the leading questions before the American people and the assurance of my earnest wish for the success of our excellent State ticket.”

But neither a message from the President, although it aroused the party like the crack of a whip over a straining team, nor the eleventh hour endorsement of the convention’s work by the seceding State Democracy, could bring the desired result. The State gave the Republicans nearly 100,000 plurality, but the loss of New York City by 40,000 was a bitter disappointment to the friends of good government who had so recently rejoiced over their escape from Croker’s control.³ The independent press, which had hitherto been

	3		
	<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Rep. Plurality</i>
Secretary of State	601,205	511,060	90,145
Comptroller	603,125	508,832	94,293
Treasurer	601,418	510,165	91,253
Atty.-Gen.	603,358	508,600	94,758
Legislature, Senate, Reps. 35, Dems. 14, Ind. Rep. 1; Assembly, Reps. 103, Dems. 47. Secretary of State, Prohibition, 25,239; Labour, 21,497; Populist, 6,916. Total vote for Secretary of State, 1,165,917; total vote (1894), 1,275,671. Secretary of State in New York County, King, Dem., 141,136; Palmer, Rep., 97,476.			

Roosevelt's admirer, lamented his action. "In enforcing an unpopular law, a police commissioner in this city, facing a hostile population, ought to have effaced himself completely," said the *Evening Post* (November 6). "His activity and speeches have led the masses to suppose that he was the prime mover in the whole business." The *Times* (November 6) was more charitable. "Roosevelt's action itself would not have been sufficient to cause the change of such an enormous vote, if Warner Miller by his excise amendment at Saratoga had not convinced the Germans of this city that all chance of redress for their grievances was hopeless from a Republican legislature." The *Tribune* deeply regretted Tammany's success, but it undoubtedly expressed the sentiment of a great majority of its party. "It seemed perfectly clear," it said, "that the Republican party lost nothing by taking a positive stand upon the question of enforcing the time-honoured Sunday laws. It comes out of the campaign, too, with its honour untarnished and with the satisfaction of having acted with the courage of its convictions." ⁴

Roosevelt explained that a strong sentiment existed in favour of keeping the saloons closed on Sunday, but unfortunately too many of the people who wished the law enforced objected to every step necessary to accomplish the result, evading the law under the statute permitting any man to take liquor with his meals, one magistrate deciding officially that seventeen beers and one pretzel made a meal. "A further very dark fact was that many of the men responsible for putting the law on the statute books in order to please one element of their constituents, also connived at or even profited by the corrupt and partial non-enforcement of the law to please another set of their constituents. . . . But my prime object, that of stopping blackmail, was largely attained." ⁵

⁴ New York *Tribune*, November 6.

⁵ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, pp. 208-9.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DECLINE OF MORTON

1896

THE candidacy of Governor Morton for President, so unanimously approved by the State convention in the preceding year, seemed fairly prosperous in the early part of 1896. His views favouring "sound money," which resembled those of President Cleveland, gave him great prestige in business circles of the country. The talk of other candidates had been more indefinite. Since the Republican National Convention in 1892 declared for "bimetallism," a demand for the free coinage of silver, sourcing in the silver-mining States and led by Senator Teller of Colorado, had swept through the West and South, invading both parties, and covering large areas in the Middle and Eastern States. The controversy had thus grown more and more absorbing, indicating that it was destined to become the chief issue in the campaign, and although Republicans, especially in the East, generally favoured sound money on the existing gold basis, Presidential candidates preferred to keep in the shade. Morton did not exploit his views in the press, but bankers and other business men needed no special information. Warner Miller on his return from the West in January reported the sound money men decidedly favourable to the Governor.

Notwithstanding, his prestige began to dwindle as his subservience to Platt reappeared during the legislative session of 1896. His influence had aided in securing desirable reforms for New York City by the passage of the special jury bill and of amendments beneficial to the Rapid Transit Act. But he had permitted the school bill and amendments to the Corrupt Practice Act to be beaten, and had shown

even less interest in the measure intended to strengthen civil service reform under the recent constitutional amendment. His approval of the Raines Liquor Bill and the Greater New York Consolidation Act, however, had seemed to be the last straw. Although the high-tax feature of the Raines bill met with general approval, the provisions taking away the right of home-rule from the principal cities and governing them by a State excise commissioner could not be forgiven. It injected a deeper spirit of animosity into the controversy because, to avoid the civil service law, the two hundred or more appointees provided to operate the measure became "confidential agents," or the personal creatures of a party boss. The anti-Platt press declared the sole purpose of the bill was to strengthen the political machine, a proposition so self-evident that many legislators revolted. Of the one hundred and three Republican assemblymen, only sixty-four, or twelve more than a majority, favoured it. However, with locked doors and a dominating rule, Speaker Fish drove it through (March 12) and the Governor signed it, afterwards appointing a noted spoilsman for excise commissioner.

The Greater New York bill, providing for the formal act of consolidation on January 1, 1898, aroused a fiercer opposition. The purpose of the measure was to lay the foundation upon which supplementary legislation would subsequently put the patronage of two great cities into the hands of one political machine, and although the bold, audacious scheme has since accomplished some good, it excited such intense antagonism at the time that several of Platt's devoted lieutenants opposed it, compelling Tammany, its secret ally, to furnish the needed votes to pass it. Then the Governor balked. In fact, his detestation of the scheme revealed itself so plainly in letters and interviews that Platt found it necessary to rowel him again with a fierceness that hurt. This accomplished its purpose. The Governor had an appearance of grave and benign wisdom, but in politics he was often a pattern of outwardly dignified yet nerveless

respectability, which may become more dangerous than recklessness.

Meantime the anti-Platt leaders organised clubs in the interest of William McKinley's candidacy for President. In the Middle West canvasses showed him stronger than all his rivals, and when the movement started in New York it quickly rooted itself in Buffalo, in Brooklyn, and in other localities. This was a blow at Morton, and to control the delegates to the Republican National convention at St. Louis on June 16, Platt had the State convention called to meet on March 24 at New York City. Although a month later than Hill's snap-convention in 1892, its purpose sourced in the same hurry-up reasons. His aversion to McKinley resembled Hill's dislike of Cleveland, and believing his popularity due to his attitude on the silver question, the former Senator hoped to check it by having New York make an early declaration for Morton and a gold standard. Platt's action tended to increase the sentiment for McKinley, the memory of whose speeches and charming personality had filled the State with admirers in 1894. They regarded him a statesman of the best instincts and highest duties, which led him to serve the people, and in the convention this feeling amply asserted itself. The delegates, without division, promptly adopted a money resolution which became historic, since it first used the word "gold" in place of "sound money," and condemned agitation for the free coinage of silver as a disturbance to business interests and an attempt to degrade the long-established standard of our monetary system.² But when the Chairman, an organisation orator, casually referred to the "McKinley Act," the solemn stillness instantly changed into an uproar of applause, to be renewed more vociferously when a resolution demanded that

² Resolved, that, until there is a prospect of an international agreement as to silver coinage, and while gold remains the standard of the United States and of the civilised world, the Republican party of New York declares itself in favour of the firm and honourable maintenance of that standard.

"if it appears after the first ballot that Levi P. Morton cannot be the choice of the National Convention, the delegates-at-large from New York shall use all honourable means to promote the nomination of William McKinley of Ohio."

As the cheers gathered in force a McKinley banner, unfurled from the top gallery, calmly waved over Morton's portrait, occasionally hiding it from view. This turned the convention into a pandemonium. The Morton backers, unable to remove the flag or still the tumult, started a counter demonstration, the hullabaloo continuing until exhaustion ended it. Although a roll-call defeated the resolution by a vote of 109 to 631,³ the demonstration spoiled the much advertised loyalty of the Empire State to Morton, if it did not open the latter's eyes to the extent to which his ambition had been played upon by a wily, if not heartless, boss.⁴

The demonstration did more than this, however. It heartened the McKinley backers, who multiplied their clubs with the view of electing district delegates to the National Convention. To offset these State-wide activities, Platt

³ The following delegates-at-large were elected: Thomas C. Platt, Warner Miller, Chauncey M. Depew, and Edward Lauterbach.

⁴ "Some weeks later, in the Hanna home, we were sitting in what Mr. Hanna called his den. After dinner when McKinley asked Hanna what report he had to make of his visit to Platt and Quay, Hanna said, 'You can get both New York and Pennsylvania, Governor, but there are certain conditions.' McKinley asked, 'What are they?' Hanna replied, 'They want a promise that you will appoint Tom Platt Secretary of the Treasury, and they want it in writing! Platt says he has had an experience with one President—Harrison—born in Ohio, and he wants no more verbal promises.'

"McKinley was smoking a cigar. He threw his head back and let the smoke curl up for a moment or so; then got up and paced the little room for a few minutes. Finally facing Hanna, Herrick and me, he said: 'There are some things in this world that come too high. If I cannot be President without promising to make Tom Platt Secretary of the Treasury, I will never be President.' Hanna remarked, 'New York and Pennsylvania will clinch the nomination—with the votes already in sight.' McKinley said, 'I can't do it, Mark.'" H. H. Kohlsaat, *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 27, 1922.

sent his faithful supporters a private circular letter, dated May 11. "McKinley," it said, "is not a well-balanced man as Governor Morton is. He is not a great man as Mr. Reed is. He is not a trained and educated public man as Senator Allison is. He is not an astute political leader as Senator Quay is. He is simply a clever gentleman, much too amiable and impressionable to be safely intrusted with great executive office; whose desire for honour happens to have the accidental advantage of the association of his name with the last Republican protective tariff. . . . Fully as important as the tariff is the measure that must be devised to render our currency system intelligible, safe and elastic. He has made all sorts of remarks and cast all sorts of votes on the money question. In a word, he has acted not from settled principles and convictions, but in accordance with what he considered at the time to be popular. Nobody can look at McKinley's record and read the flabby things he has said without perceiving that he has no fixed opinions, but has been turned and twisted by changing public opinion." ⁵

During the preceding decade McKinley's monetary views had not materially differed from those of other prominent Republicans, and the money plank of the Ohio State convention, adopted on March 11, presumably represented his position. It said: "We contend for honest money; for a currency of gold, silver and paper, that shall be as good as the Government; and to this end we favour bimetallism, and demand both gold and silver as standard money, either in accordance with a ratio to be fixed by an international agreement or under such restrictions as will secure the maintenance of the parities of value of the two metals, so that the purchasing power of the dollar, whether of gold, silver or paper, shall be at all times equal." As the exploitation of the free-coinage of silver became more acute, the Ohio expression when compared with the later New York plank seemed over-cautious. The *Boston Journal* (March 16)

⁵ New York *Tribune*, December 17, 1897. For a later-day revised version, see Platt's *Autobiography*, pp. 312-3.

called it "a plank that wobbles." Gold-standard advocates generally thought it insufficient. Aiming a shot at McKinley, whose popularity chafed him, Speaker Reed said: "When I was a boy the circus never came up to the show-bills, but there was always at least one first-class acrobat who could ride two horses at once."

Notwithstanding, every candid observer conceded that McKinley aroused more enthusiasm than all other aspirants. Although enthusiasm for somebody seemed a Whig and afterwards a Republican trait, the cause of this overwhelming demand for McKinley became an interesting study, since he possessed neither the historic career of a great soldier like Taylor and Grant, nor the personal hold upon the party which had given Clay and Blaine a dominating influence. Various reasons were assigned. Many thought it due to the association of his name with the tariff act, which, if reenacted, would restore "the lost prosperity"; others, that he was more favourable to silver than other candidates; others still, that a widespread feeling existed that his was a contest against the bosses who sought to defeat the popular will; while not a few, perhaps most of the politicians, believed it traceable to Mark Hanna's shrewd management, prodigal expenditure of money, and forceful, bargaining diplomacy. That the last reason greatly contributed no one denied. Hanna had learned his trade campaigning for John Sherman in 1880, in 1884, and again in 1888; but not until 1896 did he burst into bloom as a dominating personality, whose force of character quickly put him ahead of older men of greater prestige. He was at home in the East as well as in the West. On Wall Street he killed all fear of McKinley's earlier silver record, while his large industrial interests and business success inspired confidence in the soundness of his advice. What he said people accepted as the views of McKinley, and what he promised they believed McKinley would fulfil. The Boston *Transcript* remarked that "Hanna seems to be a dictator over whom Platt and Quay have a limited jurisdiction."

It is easy to understand that in New York Hanna hackled Platt. Warner Miller, forsaking Morton, early joined the McKinley supporters, and wherever district contests occurred Hanna kept in close touch with his local leaders. Indeed, the desertion from Morton created the belief that he would withdraw. "This is his opportunity to retreat with honour," said the *Syracuse Post* (May 6). But Platt's analysis of the McKinley reports from other States had a restraining influence. Whereupon the *Tribune* commented (May 8): "Morton is entitled to sympathy as the predestined victim of a political enterprise of which he is led to believe he is to be the chief beneficiary. But it is a melancholy reflection that in the allurements of that ambition he has so far forgotten his duty as to lend himself completely to the selfish and mischievous designs of a corrupt cabal, who have used and abused his name and reputation, his office and his power."

When the New York delegation reached St. Louis, and the Committee on Credentials had settled the six contests from New York City, a vote for chairman revealed seventeen of the seventy-two members for McKinley. To add to Platt's discomfiture, his ally, Joseph H. Manley of Maine, Thomas B. Reed's campaign manager, conceded McKinley's nomination on the first ballot. Reed never forgave the nerveless, unmanly concession, although based on common knowledge. Nevertheless, Platt still hugged the hope that the anticipated trouble of framing a money plank, which sourced in the demand for a gold standard and in the threats of free-silver advocates, would break the Ohioan's prestige. He had some reason for his surmise. Sensational reports of differences daily appeared, while Mark Hanna, Myron T. Herrick, and other intimates of McKinley had no positive views to publish. In his earnest desire to round up a pledged majority of delegates, protests against the word "gold" from Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Nebraska and other States west of the Mississippi, where the greater portion of McKinley delegates hailed from, satisfied Hanna that the

word carried a deadly current and must be avoided. The tentative resolutions submitted to McKinley, therefore, "maintained the existing standard." On June 12, however, four days before the convention opened, the word "gold" was inserted with Hanna's approval. To his friend, H. H. Kolhsaat, who had for months insisted upon its insertion, he said: "I am just as strong a gold man as you are, but if I had been as outspoken as you I could not have gotten the votes for McKinley,"—adding that he then had over five hundred and thirty pledges and it required only four hundred and sixty-three votes to nominate.⁶ Platt's hope quickly withered when Hanna showed him a copy of this resolution, drafted substantially as it was later adopted by the convention. At its first meeting the Committee of Resolutions adopted it by a vote of 40 yeas to 11 noes. Thereupon Senator Teller of Colorado gave notice that upon its adoption by the convention he with other representatives of free-silver would quietly retire.⁷

When presented to the convention, the delegates adopted the platform entire, the money-plank, voted upon separately, receiving 812½ yeas and 110½ noes. Senator Teller then made his speech of retirement and immediately left the auditorium followed by twenty others.⁸ The publicity of the forthcoming secession had intensified the interest, but nothing of the spectacular occurred. The audience rose, many derisively shouted their good-byes, the band played, and the little procession was soon lost amidst the great crowd of standing spectators. It was neither dramatic nor pathetic.

⁶ *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 27, 1922.

⁷ Additional to the money-plank the platform stressed the calamity of having a full and unrestricted control of the Government by the Democratic party; renewed its allegiance to protection; demanded reciprocity, and favoured justice to veterans, sympathy for suffering Cuba, the maintenance of a sufficient navy, the enforcement of immigration laws, the extension of the civil service, the protection of the ballot, and the admission as States of the remaining Territories.

⁸ These delegates represented, Colorado, 8; Montana, 1; Utah, 3; South Dakota, 1; Nevada, 2; Idaho, 6.

To most of the audience it seemed a ridiculous performance.

Although supporters of other candidates maintained their headquarters, held conferences, and sought combinations, the arrival of delegates and the satisfactory adjustment of the platform hourly added to McKinley's wide margin and strengthened Manley's early concession. For all that, the oratorical contest of presenting candidates consumed a day. Depew, who received a gratifying ovation, spoke for Morton. But no real, live demonstration occurred until the clerk called "Ohio." Then a wild, spectacular display of waving flags, with noisy horns and throat-splitting yells, held sway for nearly half an hour. A repetition of this pageant followed the announcement of McKinley's nomination on the first ballot by the overwhelming majority of 421 votes over all others.⁹

Thus far Platt had signally failed. He had claimed 68 of the 72 delegates for Morton; threatened trouble if the National Committee admitted the six contesting McKinley delegates from New York City; prophesied an alarming disagreement on the silver question; and declared McKinley's nomination impossible because a misfit on a gold-standard platform. But everything had happened otherwise. The McKinley contestants obtained their seats; Morton received only 55 of the 72 New York votes; the financial plank had seriously disturbed no one outside the so-called Silver States; and McKinley's nomination had occurred on the first ballot. To improve such a record he advocated Morton for Vice President.

In a telegram to Depew, Morton declined to stand. But Platt sent out his missionaries, who put up a square fight, claiming that the ticket should be balanced geographically by the largest doubtful State. Depew protested, declaring

⁹ The roll-call resulted: McKinley, 661½; Reed, 84½; Quay, 61½; Morton, 58; Allison, 35½; Cameron of Pa., 1. New York gave Morton 55, McKinley 17. Morton also received 1 vote from Alabama and 2 from Florida. Warner Miller, in obedience to the instructions of the State convention, voted for Morton.

any one a "traitor" who presented his name. Warner Miller, whose activity for McKinley measured his hatred of Platt, threatened to take the stage against the Governor, while Cornelius S. Bliss, who had given his friend Morton the half vote allowed him over Platt's protest, proclaimed his opposition to such a humiliation. To aid in checkmating the scheme the McKinley League of New York, in a formal resolution, denounced it as a menace to the party, since it would weaken the ticket in the Empire State. Even so, Platt refused to call in his scouts until the McKinley delegates, disinclined to choose from a State dominated by factional bitterness, swung to Garret A. Hobart of New Jersey, the opposition scattering its strength between Henry Clay Evans of Tennessee and half a dozen others, Hobart receiving the nomination on the first ballot.¹⁰ So Platt returned from St. Louis neither upon his shield nor with it.

But in the New York Republican State convention, which assembled at Saratoga on August 25, he was the master. It excluded Warner Miller as a delegate, refusing him even an opportunity to present his case until Platt consented. As a further exhibition of its profound loyalty, it indicated a willingness to nominate Platt for governor. Whether intended to make non-idolaters feel the whip, or to exhibit Platt's strength because of its moral effect upon the minds of people who saw him lose his grip at St. Louis, it spurred all avowed organisation candidates to offer to surrender their holdings. Such willing sacrifice and devotion deeply moved the dictator. He yearned to hold high office again. Since his failure to re-enter the United States Senate in 1881 he had patiently waited for the coming of a Republican flood to float him in, and as one now seemed at hand the

¹⁰ The ballot resulted as follows: Garret A. Hobart, N. J., 535½; Henry Clay Evans, Tenn., 277½; Morgan A. Bulkeley, Conn., 39; James A. Walker, Va., 24; Chauncey M. Depew, N. Y., 3; Thomas B. Reed, Me., 3; Levi P. Morton, N. Y., 1. The vote for Morton came from Maine.

ambition to be governor and then senator, following the upward flight of David B. Hill, gripped him tightly, until John Raines, a devoted friend and author of the famous liquor law, had the temerity not only to predict his humiliating defeat at the polls, but to excite his suspicion, if it did not already exist, that Lemuel E. Quigg and Edward Lauterbach, who had urged the governorship, had an eye upon the Senate. A word to the wise seemed sufficient.

But the decision left him in the condition of the old woman who lived in a shoe, for a swarm of able lieutenants announced their candidacy for governor. Some he did not want, some he preferred to others, but none of them did he dare openly to oppose or to favour. To add to his embarrassment the two candidates with the largest followings, George W. Aldridge, commissioner of public works, and Hamilton Fish, the submissive Speaker, had records with weak spots, the former having built up a threateningly strong political machine in defiance of the civil service law, while the latter lacked the qualities of a successful runner. Clarence Lexow, the titular head of Tammany's investigators, although personally likable, also suffered in popularity because of his obsequious fidelity. Then there were Timothy E. Ellsworth of Lockport, distinguished as a soldier and an able lawyer, and Benjamin B. Odell of Newburgh, just coming into State-wide repute as a fighting organiser and promising new congressman. But Ellsworth had a mind of his own, and Odell had disapproved the Greater New York bill. In the same group appeared another new aspiring congressman, Frank S. Black of Rensselaer, a forceful lawyer, who had exhibited great courage in prosecuting the Troy gang of election repeaters, and in sending "Bat" Shea to the electric chair for the murder of a Republican inspector. He was not, however, merely energetic and fearless. He had a peculiarly effective style of speaking, flavoured with originality of thought, aptness and piquancy of metaphor, and humour of a fresh and vigor-

ous order. To the people of the State he was practically a stranger, but his speech as temporary chairman of the convention, curiously unlike what delegates usually heard on such occasions, greatly benefited his candidacy. Besides showing intellectual qualities of a high order, it branched into topical surprises, and at all turns edified and amused his listeners.

Outside the Platt fold James A. Roberts, the State comptroller, and Charles T. Saxton, the lieutenant-governor, were held in high popular favour. Roberts did not appear as a volunteer candidate. He had not sought the office of comptroller in 1893, but he had shown such rare firmness in resisting the dictation of spoilsmen that his friends picked him for an ideal governor. Saxton's nerve, as previously shown, had been dramatically disclosed, and his popularity fully tested. Still, neither he nor Roberts, although greatly admired for their ability and courage, had much standing with the flattering trustees of the machine, and the greater part of their votes passed to Black on the third ballot. At this juncture Platt called together Black, Odell, Louis Payn and other trusted lieutenants. As the men with weak records were leading, it became necessary to pick a candidate who would obey Platt, stand the criticisms of a hotly contested campaign, and secure the needed votes on election day. It was a hurried conference, an open ballot disclosing one vote for Black and the others for Odell. After the conferees had separated, however, Payn, the Warwick, recalling Odell's objection to the New York charter, urged Black as the safer candidate, and with amazing cunning signals flashed to the waiting, well-trained local leaders, who corralled all the votes save a few for Aldridge and Fish, giving Black 675 of the 758 cast.¹¹

¹¹ Candidates	1	2	3	4
John J. Palmer	39	31		
Archie E. Baxter	59	55	51	
Frank S. Black	36	37	154	675
James A. Roberts	95	91	35	

Black's nomination did not surprise the convention. It seemed the proper thing to do. The preference shown by the Roberts and Saxton delegates, who represented an anti-Platt strength, encouraged such action, while Black's happy speech, replete with clever phrases and flashes of real wit, which tempered its partisan bitterness and lifted it above the sensational, had already captured the assembly. But it showed the remarkable strength of the Platt machine that the lightning change from Odell to Black, an incident unique in the history of organisation politics, did not throw it out of gear. Neither Odell nor the conferees questioned Platt's right to take Black, although the apparent subtle influence of Payn, which dated from the "transom episode" of 1881, severely galled them. Platt's decision, however, rooted deeper than Payn's advice. He recalled that Odell's union with S. Fred Nixon, already an influential assemblyman from Chautauqua, had absolutely blocked the Greater New York bill until his importunities induced them to yield. Nor did he fail to notice that a dozen of his own trusted lieutenants, hastily summoned, without time to confer or carefully to consider, had promptly selected Odell for governor. It warned him that a man of such personality, gifted as an organiser and having the courage of his conviction, if once governor, might shatter his own control, and without hesitation he sent word to nominate Black. It left a wound, however, that did not heal.

The convention completed the State ticket by nominating Timothy L. Woodruff of Brooklyn for lieutenant-governor and Irving G. Vann of Syracuse for the Court of Appeals.

<i>Candidates</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
James W. Wadsworth	55	51	42	
George W. Aldridge	224	227	242	77
Timothy E. Ellsworth	12	10	5	
Hamilton Fish	111	123	119	6
Edgar A. Brackett	33	33		
Charles T. Saxton	72	66	15	
J. Sloat Fassett	21	29	6	
Benjamin B. Odell		5	82	

Woodruff marshalled the young men. He talked well, combined business with politics without impairing his vivacity or agreeableness, and never practised the disparaging tricks prompted by jealousy. Although destined to disappointments, he kept his high spirits and was twice re-elected, being an unprecedented honour.

CHAPTER XXVII

CLEVELAND, HILL, AND PARTY REGULARITY

1896

ALTHOUGH the Republicans of New York had declared for the gold standard early in March (1896), the Democrats, under the leadership of Senator Hill, continued a policy of watchful waiting. The President stood boldly for sound money. His letter to the Democratic Editorial Association of New York (May 14, 1895) urged loyalty to the principles always held by the party, and resistance to the propaganda of free and unlimited coinage of silver by the Government. To the business men of Chicago he advocated a campaign of education, and to further such a policy he sent John G. Carlisle, his secretary of the treasury, through the South. His veto of the bill for the coinage of the seigniorage also disclosed his unconquerable will.

But Hill loitered. Like other politicians in both parties he had sidestepped the phrase "sound money." In January, 1892, at the opening of his campaign as a candidate for the Presidency, he delivered at Elmira a carefully prepared speech advocating "bi-metallism under an international agreement if possible to secure one, otherwise for independent bi-metallism. This is the one great goal for which we should strive—unrestricted coinage for gold and silver alike as pledged by the Democratic National platform."¹ In 1895 he incorporated this view in the State platform, which boldly opposed the free and unlimited coinage of silver. Meanwhile the sentiment favouring silver spread with alarming rapidity over the West and South,

¹ See also his letter to the Atlanta Constitution, July 16, 1893.

deeply stirring the business men of all sections and renewing the earlier talk of Cleveland's renomination.

This "third term" talk exasperated many Democratic politicians, who thought the wave of popularity which carried Cleveland into the White House had long ago subsided. Anti-snappers complained of inattention; reformers deplored his readiness to yield to party place-hunters; radical free-silver advocates held him responsible for defeating the policy of the Bland bill; and United States senators of high standing charged the use of patronage to effect the repeal of the Sherman Silver Act. A feeling existed, too, that he assumed the rôle of schoolmaster, compelling the acceptance of his views or making himself highly disagreeable. Henry Waterson thought him "over-credulous, excessive in his dislikes, and suspicious withal."² Although Senator Hill, as previously stated, had urged the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and defended the President against the attacks of senators of his own party, he had no personal relations with him. Neither an invitation for conference, nor a word or note of thanks, nor a bit of patronage came to him. Perhaps the Senator preferred it should be so. However this may be, Hill was not in sympathy with the third term talk.

That Cleveland never seriously thought of a renomination was then well-known. But the more he fought the free-silver craze, the more pronounced became the gossip. His suppression of Chicago's riotous strikers and the fearless stand for the Monroe Doctrine greatly increased his prestige. The remark "Let's put some guts into it," as he finished reading Olney's message to Congress reciting the facts of the Venezuela boundary dispute, at once became historic. Then he wrote: "It is the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power the aggression of Great Britain to exercise control or authority over any territory which we have determined belongs to Venezuela." This was not a bluff. He had shown a similar spirit in the Alaskan fisher-

² *Marse Henry*, Vol. 1, p. 332.

ies, in the peremptory dismissal of Sir Sackville West, British minister at Washington, for his indiscreet campaign letter, and in his efforts to preserve Samoan sovereignty. "But if actual accomplishment was small," says McElroy, "the influence of his persistent struggle against what he considered German imperialism in Samoa, American imperialism in Hawaii and British imperialism in Venezuela was certainly considerable. He dared to stand for the rights of weak and helpless nations at a time when it was, internationally, the fashion to disregard them, and in so doing committed the nation to a policy as creditable as it was unusual."³ This spirit stiffened the "third term" talk, and the President's refusal to break his silence naturally irritated, if it did not make apathetic, many sound money Democrats of substantial influence, who would otherwise have endeavoured to arrest the free-silver propaganda.⁴

That such a feeling affected Senator Hill was evident, otherwise he would have called an early State convention and adopted a sound money plank as a warning to the silver States. Instead, he fixed the convention for June 24, ten days after the Republican National convention (June 14) and less than two weeks before the Democratic National convention, which assembled at Chicago on July 7. This play of the politician did not go unnoticed. The independent and Democratic press representing sound money pronounced such inactivity the most shameful feature of the pre-con-

³ Robert M. McElroy, *The Life of Cleveland*, Chapter X, p. 1.

⁴ At a dinner-table conference at Wolfert's Roost in April, 1896, after Vice-president Stevenson, John R. McLean, Senators Hill, Brice, and Gorman, and Judge Alton B. Parker had considered the necessity of preventing the adoption of a free-silver plank at the National Democratic Convention, McLean proposed to Brice that they head the delegation from Ohio and go to Chicago for that purpose. Brice, in his explosive manner, declined, adding: "I don't propose to pull any more chestnuts out of the fire for Grover Cleveland. If you will get a statement from him that he will not be a candidate, I will do it." Bixby, George S., *Life of Hill*.

vention canvass. "While the free coinage men have everywhere been earnest and zealous," said the *New York Evening Post* (July 5), "the sound money men have done practically nothing to stem the tide. In New York, which should have demanded weeks ago a sound currency plank for Chicago, nothing was done until a few days before the national convention was to assemble."

To the delegates assembled in State convention at Saratoga on June 24 a money plank became the only subject of interest. Factional differences except as to the Shepard Democracy seemed to be healed. Over the stage of the auditorium hung portraits of Cleveland, Hill, and Flower, while amiability characterised the demeanour of all. John Boyd Thacher became chairman, and upon Hill as head of the Committee on Resolutions, assisted by William C. Whitney, who had passed the preceding night at Wolfert's Roost, fell the task of settling the silver problem. Their views differed little. Hill's international bi-metallism and Whitney's predilection for the existing standard, made a safe sound money combination, and in due time they presented a plank, which the organisation, in view of the growing free-silver sentiment in the State, thought a masterpiece of hardihood, if not faultless in tactics. It read as follows: "We are in favour of gold and silver as the standard money of the country, but we oppose gold or silver monometallism. We believe bi-metallism can be secured and maintained only through the concurrent action of the leading nations of the world, and are therefore opposed to the free and unlimited coinage of silver in the absence of the co-operation of other great nations. We favour the rigid maintenance of the present gold standard as essential to the preservation of our national credit. We insist that all our paper and silver currency shall be kept absolutely at a parity with gold." ⁵ The applause, on its presentation, did not rise to emotional

⁵ Other planks endorsed the administration of President Cleveland, demanded a tariff for revenue only, and expressed sympathy for the Cubans.

cheers, but the convention adopted it without debate, and then bound its delegates with the unit rule.⁶

Upon their arrival at Chicago (July 7) they found the radical Silverites of the South and West in control, divided in their Presidential preferences between Richard S. Bland of Missouri and several favourite sons, including Senator Teller of Colorado, whose recent letter ranked him as an extreme Silverite; but the then influential Governor Altgeld of Illinois, an ardent advocate of free-silver, was the dominant figure, who, had he been eligible, would doubtless have been the nominee for President. He backed a "Senatorial clique"⁷ which dictated the convention's policy and hoped to control its nominations. To these elements President Cleveland was anathema. Indeed, his portrait, which hung in New York's headquarters, in some mysterious manner suddenly disappeared, the cause subsequently assigned being "a weak string." In its place appeared former Governor Flower's, with Hill's and Murphy's on either side.

Senator Hill avoided the multitude. He did not attend the sound money mass-meeting addressed by former Governors Flower of New York and William E. Russell of Massachusetts, but kept in retirement awaiting the result of a contest between himself and Senator John W. Daniels of Virginia for temporary chairman. The National Committee, through the efforts of Whitney and Don M. Dickinson of Michigan,⁸ a postmaster-general during Cleveland's first term, had designated Hill by a vote of 27 to 23, and to secure a compromise on the silver question they quietly presented a proposition for bargaining purposes, stressing the awful calamity to the Democracy, if the South and West, by their adherence to the free and unlimited coinage of silver,

⁶ Delegates at large: David B. Hill, Edward Murphy, Roswell P. Flower, and Frederick R. Coudert.

⁷ Composed of Senators Jones of Ark., Vest and Cockrell of Mo., Harris and Bate of Tenn., Blackburn of Ky., Martin of Kansas, Tillman of South Carolina, Gov. Stone of Mo., and Gov. Altgeld of Ill.

⁸ Dickinson was a native of Oswego, N. Y.

should smash the party's organisation in the East. To gain its favourable consideration Hill interviewed Governor Altgeld.

This aroused a suspicion, subsequently referred to by Bryan, that Hill's candidacy for temporary chairman concealed an ambition to seize the Presidential nomination. Whether truth or fiction, it served to unite the Silverites into a vigorous support of Daniels. It was a famous contest. Between the two champions, nearly of the same age, a warm friendship had long existed. One seemed the counterpart of the other. Though careless of the graces of diction or the phrase-maker's art, Hill admired the Virginian's ornate, rounded periods, his placidity, and his gentle thoughtfulness of others; while Daniels appreciated Hill's bluff, pointed address, his ability to organise men of differing views, and the hauteur that too often, perhaps, lessened his influence. Hill's tendency to haughtiness, however, never impaired the geniality and tenderness of his relations with the Senator. Frequently they accompanied each other to the Capitol and entered the Senate—Hill supporting the Southerner, limping from the effects of a wound received at the battle of the Wilderness. The fact that Daniels had presented Hill as a candidate for President in 1892 also added interest to the desperate contest, which the Virginian softened by the delicate compliment of voting for his friend.

Whitney, still enthroned as dictator, divined that the struggle would disclose the strength of the free-silver issue, and to make a strong, stirring presentation of Hill, he selected with great care from several States the ablest speakers, who made party loyalty and the sacredness of precedent the keynote of their eulogies. That he never bolted, or companioned with Mugwumps or Independents, but stood for party right or wrong, declaring "I am a Democrat," featured the debate. "If you must select a victim to drag to the altar," exclaimed John R. Fellows, the brilliant orator, "at least do not select one so hallowed to the people and so loved by the Democracy." His spirited

attack upon the hitherto unquestioned right of the National Committee to select a temporary chairman touched a deeper chord. "You propose," he said, "to begin the convention by adopting a Republican precedent, disowned, dishonoured, flouted by Democrats always and everywhere." This reference to the elevation of a negro had a visible effect.⁹ But when he exclaimed: "Will you do it?" there came a ringing response: "We will."

The friends of Senator Daniels complimented Hill's party loyalty, but did not hesitate to recall that in 1892 he had sought and in some cases obtained their support on the strength of his friendliness to free-silver as shown in his famous Elmira speech of that year. If he spoke from deeply rooted principle then, they asked, why is he now fighting the men to whom he formerly appealed? If personal interests have changed his views, what reason exists for supporting him in this crisis when our principle is at stake? The vociferous cheers that followed left no room to doubt the fierce determination of the silverite leaders to preserve an unbroken front and thus demonstrate that they held their followers securely in hand. Nevertheless, a roll-call, giving Daniels 566 to 349 for Hill, encouraged the sound money delegates, since it disclosed the absence of a two-thirds majority. The next day, however, the convention, with a riotous display of ungoverned party zeal and political passion, made up the necessary two-thirds by unseating the sound money delegations from Nebraska and Michigan. The audacious unfairness of the reports, especially the one relating to Michigan, was so apparent that it stirred William F. Sheehan of New York, accustomed to political evasion, into a speech notable for its denunciatory forcefulness and clear analysis of a conscienceless fraud. But the convention, after listening to the hyperbolic speeches, approved both reports. This let in William Jennings Bryan, who joined

⁹ In 1884 the Republican National convention substituted John R. Lynch of Miss., a negro, for Powell Clayton of Ark., the choice of the National Committee. See p. 192.

Senator Hill on the Committee on Resolutions, which had a free-silver majority so large that when Hill presented a resolution commending the Administration "for its fidelity, honesty, and courage," it received only seventeen "yeas" to twenty-nine "noes," two members not voting. Bryan declared the President had repudiated his party. The plank for "free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, without the co-operation of any other nation," received thirty-three "yeas" and fifteen "noes."¹⁰

The submission of the majority and minority reports opened the way for Hill and Bryan. From the beginning Hill was the marked man of the convention. His name was more familiar. He had more personal admirers, more eye-searchers, more calls to speak. Whenever seen the desire to hear him manifested itself in noisy demonstrations. But he had seldom appeared. His candidacy for chairman and subsequent work on the platform excluded him. Now, however, the great crowd's opportunity had come, and with prolonged cheers it welcomed him to the stage as ten thousand curious eyes measured him. His speech disappointed no one. Admirably arranged, logically presented, and concisely expressed, it revelled in criticism, exhibited a familiarity with each subject, and revealed a sincerity and frankness not always present in his arguments. "I am a Democrat, but not a revolutionist," he said. "I am utterly opposed to most of the planks of this unnecessary, ridiculous, and foolish platform. It provides for mono-metallism, not for the double standard for which the Democratic party has always stood; it endorses the free and unlimited coinage of silver without its parity with gold; it ignores the fact that silver can be mined with profit at half its former cost; it commits

¹⁰ Other important planks of the platform were: Tariff for revenue only sufficient to pay expenses of Government economically administered; a Constitutional amendment for an income tax; no Federal interference in local affairs; opposition to a third term; simplicity and economy in national affairs; no Pacific Railroad funding bill; opposition to the issue of bonds in time of peace; a mild approval of civil service.

the suicidal policy of issuing paper money in times of peace; it opposes the issue of bonds although the Wilson Tariff Act fails to raise sufficient funds; and it enlarges the Supreme Court to obtain a reversal of its decision declaring an income-tax unconstitutional." In support of his own report, he argued the necessity of maintaining the present monetary standard until international bi-metallism should be established; of observing existing contracts should a change occur in the existing standard; of suspending free silver coinage within a year should it fail to produce parity between gold and silver; and of endorsing the President because it is self-evident that the social and economic transformation of the country under his administration has shaken it free from the passions of the last four decades.

Scarcely had the generous applause for Hill ceased when Bryan took the stage. He was then little known. He had served two terms in Congress, and although his forceful speech had attracted Thomas B. Reed, it had not stirred the House. Nor had his name been seriously associated with the Presidency. But his selection to present the arguments favourable to the free coinage of silver gave him a sudden prestige, which brought a wild, high-keyed cry from the galleries as he took the place of the retiring New York Senator. His clear, far-carrying voice, as the noise subsided, also caught the multitude. It could easily hear his words as he deprecated his weakness, adding, "but the humblest citizen in the land, when clad in the armour of righteousness, is stronger than all the hosts of error. We are fighting," he went on, "in defence of our homes, our firesides, and our families. Our petitions have been scorned. But we beg no longer. We petition no more, for we are strong in our might and we defy them." Fixing attention with these passionate sentences, he delivered a studied address, sketching the growth of the free-silver idea and picturing the tremendous zeal it had injected into the Democratic party. Except his caustic reference to Hill's ambition, his facetious criticism of the Supreme Court, and the pic-

turesque blending of employers and employés, his exciting declamations exercised for the hour an influence similar to the cries of a crusade preacher, exhibiting the powers of an orator, voluble, eloquent, deep-feeling, with now and then a gleam of imagination, but never coarsely boisterous.

For a peroration he reserved the gold standard. "They ask us why we say more about money than the tariff. We reply that protection has slain its thousands, the gold standard its tens of thousands. It is the issue of 1776 over again. If they say we cannot have bi-metallism until some other nation assists, we reply we will restore bi-metallism and let England adopt it because we led the way. We shall answer their demand for the gold standard by saying to them: 'You shall not press down upon the brow of labour this crown of thorns. You shall not sacrifice mankind upon a cross of gold!'" Instantly the convention burst into a wild yell, and for many minutes a deafening pandemonium reigned. A sound-money delegate, placing his lips closely to William F. Sheehan's ear, quoted Macduff's language: "Confusion now hath made his masterpiece."

Three roll-calls resulted as follows: Upon Hill's substitute for free-silver coinage, yeas, 303; nays, 626. Upon an endorsement of the Administration, yeas, 357; nays, 564. Upon the platform as presented by the majority, yeas, 628; nays, 301.

Although eulogists presented seven candidates for President, Bryan's speech seemed to have made him the favourite, while the so-called "Senatorial clique" backed Richard P. Bland, with a strong leaning for Senator Teller, whose influence among silver Republicans, they believed, would counterbalance the threatened loss of gold Democrats. Hill refused to present or to vote for any candidate, since it would be illogical to put a gold Democrat on a free-silver platform or to vote for a free-silver man. Still, William F. Harry of Pennsylvania, chairman of the old National Committee, presented former Governor Pattison of his own State. From the first Bland and Bryan led, Pattison receiving little more

than a third of the sound money strength. On the fourth ballot Bryan shot ahead, and on the fifth, amidst great excitement, obtained the necessary two-thirds of those voting.¹¹ The sudden change staggered the Senatorial leaders, who traced their defeat to the sound-money men's failure to support Pattison. But it pleased Whitney to punish a conclave that fought the endorsement of the President.

The unexpected nomination of the young Nebraskan, then thirty-six years old, made an adjournment necessary, and when the convention reconvened (July 11), Bland and McLean, with George Fred Williams of Massachusetts, Joseph C. Sibley of Pennsylvania, and Arthur Sewell of Maine, were presented as candidates for Vice-President. Sibley and Williams soon dropped out, and Bland and McLean, when learning of the convention's action, wired their withdrawal, so that Sewell, to the surprise of himself and of the country, became the nominee. Thus ended "A Comedy of Errors." However, Sewell was a patriotic, substantial citizen, a successful ship-builder, the president of a bank, the head of the Maine Central Railroad, and a Democrat of wide influence; and while he could not hope to carry his own State, he had what may be called character, which was the one thing needed.

With rising amazement and indignation the gold Democrats of the country had steadily followed the delirium of the convention, while the Reform Club of New York City, leading the movement for a third ticket, began organising the sound money Democrats of the country. Senator Hill's action at Chicago, especially his declaration, "I am a Demo-

¹¹ William J. Bryan, Neb.	119	190	219	280	500
Richard P. Bland, Mo.	235	283	291	241	63
Horace Boise, Iowa	85	41	36	33	26
Claude Matthews, Ind.	37	33	34	36	31
John R. McLean, Ohio	54	53	54	46	
Robert E. Pattison, Pa.	95	100	97	97	95
Joseph C. S. Blackburn, Ky. ..	83	41	27	27	
Scattering	44	27	10	9	10
Not voting	178	162	162	161	162

crat, but not a revolutionist," encouraged the belief that he would head such an organisation. He was the undisputed leader of the sane element of his party. Cleveland no longer blocked the way, and those who had fought him hardest and distrusted him most would gladly join in making him the real power in the party. But on his return he refused to be interviewed, conferred with John C. Sheehan, the acting chief of Tammany, with Mayor Malloy of Troy, Murphy's close friend, and with other organisation leaders respecting the State convention. Then he took a restful yachting cruise for several days. Subsequently he retired to Wolfert's Roost, his Albany home. Here Senator Jones of Arkansas, the new chairman of the Democratic National Committee, sought him with an invitation to preside on August 12 at a Madison Square ratification meeting to be addressed by Bryan. He declined either to preside or to attend, but on August 26 he dined the candidate and his wife with several friends, including Elliott F. Danforth, the former State comptroller, who had presided at the Bryan meeting. To Bryan's optimism based on large audiences, Hill warned against mistaking curiosity for support.

Meantime the gold Democrats of the country had called a National convention to meet at Indianapolis on September 2, and without longer waiting for Hill a State convention, made up of delegates of State-wide reputation, headed by former Governor Flower, met at Syracuse on August 31. Daniel G. Griffin and Charles S. Fairchild presided, delegates to Indianapolis were selected,¹² and resolutions adopted endorsing the gold standard, commending the Cleveland administration, favouring civil service reform, repudiating the work of the St. Louis and Chicago conventions, and recommending the nomination of candidates for President and Vice President. At Indianapolis Governor Flower became chairman, and a platform similar to the Syracuse resolutions

¹² The delegates-at-large were: Roswell P. Flower, Watertown; Edward M. Shepard, Brooklyn; Charles Tracy, Albany, and George J. Magee, Watkins.

quickly found favour. The nomination of a candidate for President, however, caused difficulty if not distress. John M. Palmer, the Democratic chieftain of Illinois, then eighty years of age, declined; William E. Russell, the popular and thrice elected young Governor of Massachusetts, had suddenly died after the adjournment of the Chicago convention; and to General Bragg and Senator Vilas of Wisconsin objections existed that could not be readily adjusted. Although no one from New York encouraged it, the name of Cleveland was in the mouth of every one. "You will be nominated by acclamation to-morrow," wired Daniel G. Griffin, "unless you make definite refusal." To this the President replied: "My judgment and personal inclination are so unalterably opposed to your suggestion that I cannot for a moment entertain it." This drove the convention back to General Palmer, whose distinguished service in the civil war and in the United States Senate as an uncompromising advocate for sound money admirably fitted him for the difficult rôle, and when he finally yielded it gave him a substantial majority.¹³ Simon B. Buckner, a brave officer in the Confederate army and recently governor of Kentucky, became the candidate for Vice President by acclamation. To their ratification meeting, held at Louisville a week later (September 10), President Cleveland sent this message: "As a Democrat devoted to the principles and integrity of my party, I should be delighted to mingle with those who are determined that the voice of true Democracy shall not be smothered, and who insist that its glorious standard shall be borne aloft as of old in faithful hands."

Senator Hill affected as much disappointment over the result at Indianapolis as he did with the outcome at Chicago. He declared himself a bimetallist, and in his opinion both conventions stood for monometallism,—one for gold, the other for silver. It left him, he said, in the position of the noble son of the forest, who, when asked if he was lost, answered: "No, wigwam lost, Indian here." He proposed,

¹³ Palmer, 757; Bragg, 168.

therefore, without forfeiting his attitude at Chicago, to keep control of the party organisation, and to switch the State convention, which would assemble at Buffalo on September 14, from National to State issues. He hoped, too, with John B. Thacher as the candidate for governor, to secure through Flower the endorsement of the sound money Democrats. Senator Murphy opposed the plan. He favoured the endorsement and active support of Bryan, who, if elected, would of course give him control of the New York patronage. With little if any hope of re-election to the Senate, Hill had no such incentive; but his ambition centred in the machine of which he had so long been the master, and while he did not expect to overcome the endorsement of Bryan, he determined that new men, the wild champions of free-silver, should not displace the old leaders. He appealed, therefore, to his trusty lieutenants, especially to Elliott F. Danforth, to John W. Hinkley, chairman of the State Committee, and to John C. Sheehan, brother of the former lieutenant-governor, not to let go the helm at Buffalo. Whether he intended going to the convention is obscure. Chemung County did not as usual make him a delegate, and an election by an Albany district fettered him with instructions to support the Chicago ticket. "This action," he wrote Norton Chase (September 10), chairman of the Albany committee, "is taken in opposition to my wishes as expressed to you yesterday, and I decline to accept upon the conditions imposed, which would restrict my freedom to act as I consider best for the interests of my party." In speculating upon the reasons for disobeying his "expressed wishes," some thought it a screen to give him an excuse for not attending; others, that opponents, fearing his great prestige, took this course to keep him away. It added to the mystery that Chase made no explanation. Nevertheless, John C. Sheehan and Elliott F. Danforth found it convenient to stop over at Wolfert's Roost on their way to Buffalo.

When called to order the convention was without a recognised State leader. Flower and Fellows had joined the

sound money revolt, Murphy was ill, Croker in England, Whitney on his way to Europe, Herrick meditating, Sheehan disgusted, having resigned from the National Committee, and Hill, because of "instructions," at home with a long-distance telephone. The delegates, however, welcomed Thomas F. Grady, whose short figure, indicative of abounding strength and energy, was as familiar as his brilliant, often fallacious oratory. Trained in a school in which scruple or principle was unknown, Grady easily changed his June speech for the maintenance of the existing standard to a plea for the free and unlimited coinage of silver, and the cheers that followed showed the convention's temper. "Politicians who will thus swallow their own words," said the *New York World* (September 16), "are the victims of their bondage to Regularity. Men whose vocation is politics cannot afford the luxury of a conscience nor pretend to independent action."

It seemed to matter little to the convention what proposition it accepted. To a simple endorsement of the Chicago ticket, the Committee on Resolutions added the following: "Never in the history of the Democratic party has a platform been written which embodied more completely the interests of the whole people as distinguished from those who seek legislation for private benefit." In opposition a delegate said: "The platform proposes to give the silver mine owners the 'private benefit' exclusively of having their bullion coined free of expense at double its value, making a fifty-cent dollar. With this fact in mind, do you wish to exploit 'private benefit'?" The committee saw no merit in the objection, and when it presented the platform delegates and galleries burst into the wild cry heard at Chicago. The same spirit asserted itself in the choice of a candidate for governor. Hill had selected John B. Thacher, whose monetary views, as expressed in June, coincided with his own; but William Sulzer, a Tammany advocate of free-silver, got the applause. However, Thacher, under the firm grip of instructed local leaders who relied upon the oft-repeated declaration that he would stand on the Chicago platform,

received the nomination.¹⁴ By acclamation Wilbur F. Porter of Watertown, a general favourite, became the nominee for lieutenant-governor, and Robert C. Titus of Buffalo, an able and popular jurist, the candidate for judge of the Court of Appeals.

The great organs of the party did not conceal their antipathy. "Pity rather than anger is really the feeling excited by the melancholy proceedings of the Buffalo convention," said the *New York World* (September 19). "Indorsement of the national ticket under the rule of 'regularity' was expected. The Democratic machines in other sound money Eastern States have done likewise. But it was reserved for the New York machine convention to out-Herod Herod in its abasement. Not content with accepting the crazy Populistic platform, it declared as its deliberate judgment that 'never in the history of the Democratic party has a platform been written which embodied more completely the interests of the whole people as distinguished from those who seek legislation for private benefit.' It was the adoption of this platform, now so falsely and absurdly lauded, that led New York's seventy-two delegates to refrain from further participation in the Chicago proceedings, and won for Senator Hill the plaudits of his State by exclaiming: 'I am a Democrat, but not a revolutionist.'"

When the Syracuse sound money convention adjourned to meet at Brooklyn on September 24, it did so with the hope that the regular Democratic State convention, through the efforts of Hill, might ignore the action at Chicago, and although it had failed to do so Hill conceived the plan of inducing that meeting to endorse Thacher. For this purpose the latter made public a letter, saying: "I cannot ask for the confidence or support of the people without frankly declaring that I stand to-day where I stood in the month of June. I have not changed one iota in my belief nor deviated a step in my course. I shall cast my vote for Bryan and Sewell, the candidates in due and regular form chosen by a

¹⁴ The vote stood Thacher, 333; Sulzer, 99.

majority of the convention. I regret I cannot be in full accord on the question of finance, but if my position seems unharmonious with the usual attitude of a candidate, it should be remembered the conditions are unusual." He then attacked Morton's administration, closing with a slash at Platt. "When this great government machinery is in the hollow of the hand of one man; when he and not the people is the beneficiary of its operation, popular government is menaced and its defeat as a public enemy becomes the duty of all good men. This is the issue in the State this fall. No steps toward municipal reform can be undertaken until this question can be settled. The people have destroyed all vestiges of a political boss in the Democratic party, and I believe they will annihilate bossism in the Republican party."

Simultaneously with the appearance of this letter the Albany *Argus* said (September 21): "The *Argus* is for John Boyd Thacher for Governor because he is a Democrat and because we are Democrats. It is for him because the State issue is Plattism, not Bryanism. Differences as to National issues are unavoidable and excusable; differences as to State issues are avoidable and inexcusable. . . . The *Argus* abates no jot of its indignation at the stultification and stupidity of endorsing the Chicago platform, but it declines to submit the Democratic party to vivisection when the removal of a wart is in question. It declines to complicate State affairs with the National embroglio, and it begs of all Democrats whatever their views as to the National issue, to unite in support of the excellent State ticket and of the State issues so excellently summed up in the Buffalo platform."

To the outsider Thacher's letter seemed foolish, if not idiotic. It showed an utter lack of self-respect not to refuse to stand on a platform which favoured what he had denounced in June as unpatriotic and dishonourable, while it rendered it impossible for either Bryan or anti-Bryan Democrats to vote for him. The *Nation* (September 24) thought it "made him the most despicable candidate that ever ran for high office in the State." Tammany declared that it had

been "buncoed," and in its madness threatened summary removal from the ticket at the meeting of the State Committee on the following day. Meantime, John C. Sheehan wired Thacher that "the convention nominated you on the repeated assurance that you were prepared to stand on the Buffalo platform. In view of your letter I feel sure you are not aware of these pledges, but that once in possession of them you will take the required measures to prevent the stultification of those who pressed your claims upon the convention." Though courteously expressed this telegram meant immediate withdrawal or summary exclusion from the ticket. In response Senator Hill, holding a proxy, appeared the next evening (September 22) at the meeting of the State Committee. As he listened to a discussion of Thacher's offence and to a resolution proposing quick displacement, the frown upon his lofty, dome-shaped brow, the strangely pallid face, and eyes that seemed ominously thoughtful, indicated an intense purpose. When he took the floor, however, he spoke in a low voice, with calmness of temper, and, as if dexterously shaping the course of the debate, he reviewed Thacher's fitness, the impropriety of forcing one duly nominated from a ticket, the difficulty of finding another so well equipped, and the importance of keeping intact the State organisation, now threatened with disruption. Grady, cynical and peevish, followed him, intimating intentional concealment of Thacher's views, charging the abandonment of regularity, and declaring that unless the candidate in good faith accepts the silver issue he will not get the labouring man's vote.

When Hill rose again his calmness had disappeared, and for an hour he walked the floor, gesticulating violently, and dashing off with seeming recklessness sentence after sentence that revealed the secrets of his mind and the detestation of the party's situation. "Do not be afraid of your own shadows," he exclaimed. "It is probably true that a great many of the labouring people are in favour of free silver, but they are in the minority and do not properly

understand the subject. While governor I never refused my signature to any bill in the interest of the labouring people. Who dares to say I am not still a friend of the workingman and would not protect his interest with all my power? The leaders of Tammany Hall are afraid of the labouring people because they do not understand them. The effort to nominate a silver candidate for the governorship is an endeavour to elect Mr. Black. Cannot the masses continue to trust their old leaders, or have they become too suspicious of our good faith? Who will say that I must take unreservedly every line in the platform? Why should Mr. Thacher, in order to accept the nomination, accept every line of it? It was gotten up by Altgeld, Tillman, and mine owners from the West, who do not represent the cardinal principles of Democracy. Are you going to see such people come here and educate us in the matter of politics? Men who have spent their lives in the interest of the party are now called traitors for refusing to accept their populist theories. Out upon such doctrine! I am opposed to the insane idea which these people have tried to force upon the party. Has it come to this, that the Democratic party must take its principles from Silverites? When did a Silver Club become, per se, the Democratic party? Their object is to drive to the rear the old party leaders and have new men run the movement, controlled and pushed forward by mine owners. The trouble in this election is the same as that of 1894. The times are hard. Everywhere you turn something is wrong. The people are dissatisfied. But in this emergency are they to be turned over to the insane doctrines of leaders who are misguiding them?"¹⁵

This speech cooled Tammany, and by a vote of 42 to 2 the State Committee appointed five of its members to interview the candidate and report on September 28. Although a temporary victory for Hill, it did not relieve Thacher, who had withered under the scorching criticism. So he wrote

¹⁵ His remarks as quoted appeared in all the larger daily papers of New York State.

another letter saying that he could not accept because he hated silver incurably, adding: "I don't care four cents about being elected governor; I want to be right in this matter." This of course accentuated the foolishness of his first letter. However, he sought to relieve Hill of any part in the fantastical performance, declaring that "no human being on God's footstool knew anything about that letter except John Boyd Thacher." Grady, voicing the incredulity of Tammany, thought this statement as true as his alleged indifference to being elected governor.

The promotion of Porter followed logically, and the Brooklyn convention (September 24) acted independently. Sound money Democrats believed the free and unlimited coinage of silver menaced the business interests of the country and that to cease their opposition would be fiddling while Rome burned. So they endorsed the work of the Indianapolis convention, including a history of the genesis of the party in New York, and selected a State ticket without contest.¹⁶

As the campaign advanced Hill found himself stranded like a log in shallow water. In a letter to former Attorney-General Ward, whom he appointed to the Supreme Court, he wrote: "The situation for a Democrat who desires at all times to be loyal to his party is very difficult. . . . I was a Democrat before the Chicago convention and I am a Democrat still—very still."¹⁷ Nothing turned out as he planned. He had failed to appreciate the fact that bi-metallism had been side-tracked, and that the great fight was squarely between gold and silver. In his endeavour, therefore, to substitute alleged State grievances for the national issue, he offended both sides. It is useless to try to explain his conduct by applying rational tests to it. The trouble with him was fundamental. The order of his devotion stood self, party, and State. Nevertheless, he was an able leader, not

¹⁶ Governor, Daniel G. Griffin, Watertown; Lt. Gov., Frederick W. Heinrichs, Brooklyn; Judge of the Court of Appeals, Spencer Clinton, Buffalo.

¹⁷ Ward, *Life, Letters and Speeches*.

inspired, perhaps not popular, but necessary at least to other politicians. His intellect, strong in the construction and in the arrangement of political machinery, enabled him to assimilate all the facts needed to transform will into action. He knew the party workers in the State and their value; the industrial and racial divisions with their various political ideas; and his own influence upon them because of years of promise-keeping. Such power could not be gained with money or patronage, and although he was now down, and apparently out, his advice was again sure to be sought and his leadership accepted.

In New York the Bryan campaign early developed weakness. Hill's audaciously bold speech and subsequent silence made his local leaders indifferent. Moreover, the influence of sound money Democrats, sprinkled generously over the State, supported by the intrinsically meritorious speeches of former Governor Flower, created a realising sense of the great emergencies of the problem. Meantime the Republican tide continued to rise, and on election day it became a flood, McKinley having a plurality of 268,496 over Bryan, and Black 212,992 over Porter.¹⁸ The smallness of Palmer's vote surprised no one, for sound money Democrats, fearing their division might give the State to Bryan, very early determined to support McKinley. The excess of Porter's vote over Bryan's (23,000) manifested a like disposition. Indeed, the result proved that an hour had come in which the spirit of principle had compelled a supersession of party regularity.

¹⁸ McKinley, 819,838; Bryan, 551,369; Palmer, 18,950; Levering, Pro., 16,052; Matchett, Socialist Labour, 17,667. Black, 787,516; Porter, 574,524; Griffin, 26,698; Smith, Pro., 17,449; Balkan, Socialist Labour, 18,362. Court of Appeals, Vann, 799,122; Titus, 555,942; Clinton, 23,585. In New York City, McKinley, 156,359; Bryan, 134,377; Palmer, 5,541; Levering, Pro., 680; Matchett, S. L., 10,025. Legislature: Senate, Reps. 35, Dems. 14, Independent 1; Assembly, Reps. 114, Dems. 35, Independent 1; Congress, Reps. 30, Dems. 5. Electoral votes in U. S., McKinley, 271; Bryan, 176.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A SEVERE REPUBLICAN SETBACK

1897

GOVERNOR BLACK'S plurality in the preceding year had exceeded the staggering vote given Grover Cleveland in 1882, and the Democrats, having less than one-third of the membership in either branch of the Legislature, seemed paralysed. Moreover, the Republican organisation was supreme. Indeed, a more self-satisfied company which filled the Capitol on the day of Governor Black's inauguration, had rarely assembled at Albany. His campaign speeches, carefully studied and well phrased, had risen to the high plane of sound doctrine and fervent patriotism, while his grasp betrayed comprehension without commonplace. He had greatly pleased the party, inspiring the popular belief that such a man, instead of tolerating machine rule, would administer affairs in the interest of the whole people. His inaugural address added to this belief. It again proved him a master of clear-cut thinking, of independent opinions, and of downright courage. One sentence in particular—"I trust that no man believes the attitude of fear is worthy to play a part in the discharge of any public duty"—aroused the hope that, refusing to accept the one-man dictation, he would keep together a reunited party. Although a later statement—"No intolerant clamour or irresponsible assault will force or prevent a single Executive act"—admitted of two interpretations, the wish obtained that he would avoid selfish or factional conduct.

In his first message to the Legislature the Governor talked acceptably of economy, improved highways, the abolition of grade-crossings, the enforcement of oleomargarine laws, the

elimination of weak insurance companies, the reorganisation of the National Guard, and other matters of immediate public interest. A shiver passed through the ranks of reformers, however, when he declared that "in my judgment, civil service will work better with less starch. A scheme is not necessarily effective or high-toned because it lacks common-sense." While people did not then appreciate what "a starchless civil service" meant, or how it could be brought about, the phrase created a suspicion that he was not indifferent to things which interest intriguers. So the Progressives put watchmen on the towers.

Following the Governor's inauguration came the choice of a United States senator in place of David B. Hill. Soon after the preceding election, the *Tribune* admitted the selection of Thomas C. Platt "without serious opposition."¹ In fact, his friends purposed fixing it so that he need not ask for it. Nevertheless, the friends of Joseph H. Choate, the distinguished lawyer, launched a vigorous campaign. The Union League Club of New York appointed a Committee of Fifty, who, joining admirers in other parts of the State, held mass-meetings, circulated petitions, and sought to arouse a militant sentiment similar to that created for Evarts in 1885. Their trumpet notes made a deep impression, for thoughtful, earnest men in the party had a just and energetic appreciation of the event. Platt's course in the preceding year had deepened prejudices and stirred passions until many people, not obsessed with a lust for machine power, seemed determined to defeat the apparent control of one man, and in their campaign, while stressing the superior qualities of Choate, they naturally exploited the unfitness of Platt. They riddled his assumed credit for the gold plank adopted at the St. Louis convention; exposed his formation of the "Bosses' Combine" against McKinley, a unification of the different State machines from Maine to California; and accentuated his efforts to destroy men who refused to bend the knee. To the single charge against Choate that he had

¹ New York *Tribune*, November 13, 1896.

supported Grover Cleveland, came the authorised, killing reply that for forty years he had voted for Republican candidates on national, State, congressional, senate and assembly tickets, and for none others.

Choate's biographer thought the *Sun* said best whatever there was good to be said of Platt. "Regarding uprightness," said the *Sun*, "Mr. Choate's word is equally good with Mr. Platt's and they pay their debts with equal promptitude. Regarding ability, both possess a very high order of it. Mr. Choate has been trained in the law, which is his livelihood, to a high point of perfection; Mr. Platt has been trained in politics, which is not his livelihood, to a high point of perfection. Each is a top-sawyer in his respective walk, although Mr. Platt's regular vocation has probably made him the more expert in the ways of business. Mr. Choate's intellectual machinery, which has enjoyed far greater opportunities for display, may be more complicated, more voluminous, and more brilliant in its manifestations than Mr. Platt's; but as to the more commanding and more vital quality of judgment, we must think that Mr. Platt's is generally sounder and more valuable to his friends in council than Mr. Choate's.

"When it comes to moral stamina, the persistence and energy with which one maintains and advances his purposes, Mr. Choate has shown himself to be truly a hero on the ground where he has been tried, while on the larger and more perplexing and difficult field of public affairs where Mr. Platt has been tried, the latter has shown himself to be an indomitable, unyielding and veritable tiger. In the matter of experience, Mr. Platt is very highly trained, as Mr. Choate is not, to perceive public sentiment, to deal with it, and to respect it in his dealings. He enjoys an overwhelming advantage over Mr. Choate in political skill and practice, and his eminent and invaluable achievements in politics, in State and nation, are facts with which Mr. Choate's record provides next to nothing for comparison. Putting together the equipment of these two eminent New

Yorkers, unemotional and impartial opinion will concede that Mr. Platt is an abler and fitter man for senator, particularly for a Republican, than Mr. Choate." ²

Of course Choate gave the senatorship no serious consideration, as he would had the modern primary existed. Indeed, the organisation had so thoroughly done its work that the leaders at the caucus (January 14) did not deign to present Platt's name, but after courteously listening to eulogies of Choate, called for a vote. The ballot showed that of the 150 Republican members of the Senate and Assembly, 142 voted for Platt and 7 for Choate, one Platt man being absent because of his father's death. It is fair to say, however, that Platt's strength sourced in desire for rewards and in fear of punishment more than in admiration of his statesmanship. "Had I done otherwise," said Senator Seibert of Buffalo, "everything would be tied up in Albany and Erie County would get no appropriation for its new armory or any legislation that it wants." Assemblyman Fuller of Broome expressed a similar sentiment. "I have various important measures pending, and if I do not vote for Platt none of them will be allowed to go through." This feeling came more prominently into view when the seven bold dissenters deemed it expedient to make Platt's nomination unanimous.

Although the Democratic caucus was limited to forty-nine members and a complimentary vote, it became a hot-bed of discord. David B. Hill's course in the preceding election had disgusted both factions, and their representatives, when bottled up in a conference, developed public murmurs into a flood of censure. Nor could the voice of criticism be silenced, with the result that only thirty-nine backed the retiring Senator. Of the remaining ten, two supported Judge Titus and three sustained Wilbur F. Porter, while five refused to vote.

The banquet celebrating Platt's election became an occasion for great rejoicing. Everywhere flowers pleased the

² Martin, *Life of Choate*, Vol. 2, p. 44.

eye, a colossal floral elephant adorned the table, thousands of glasses sparkled, and daintily painted menu-cards sharpened the appetite. An absence of distinguished invited guests, however, gave it the appearance of an overflow organisation meeting. Faces and speakers were familiar, and the applause, weakened by numerous withdrawals, had a perfunctory sound. Nevertheless, the newly elected Senator interested the listeners who remained. He had rarely, if ever, been heard by an up-country audience. He was not a disciplined speaker. He wrote communications, spicy at times, which often appeared as editorials in the up-state press of his favourites, and occasionally, when attacked with virulence, he made caustic replies. But the machine of his mind did not fit him for public speaking. On this occasion, however, even those who condemned his type of bossism, signified their approval of his analysis of the existing political situation and the remedial policy which he would aid the McKinley administration in putting into operation. "Judged simply by his utterances," said the *Tribune*, "it must be said that he rose to the occasion, conveying the impression of a new sense of responsibility and a much broader conception of duty than he has hitherto manifested."³

In the meantime Governor Black began where Morton left off, reappointing Jacob Worth clerk of Kings County and George W. Aldridge superintendent of public works. He also made Louis F. Payn state superintendent of insurance. This act touched the opponents of machine methods on the raw. It destroyed confidence in the Governor's professions, and grievously offended multitudes who had warmly advocated his election. The *Buffalo Express* said (February 2): "He has made his own the low standard of political morals which bars honesty and fitness from consideration in the choice of public officials, and looks upon the man who has been most unscrupulous in politics as the man most worthy of political rewards."

³ New York *Tribune*, January 28, 1897.

This belief quickly infected many senators who faced the question of Payn's confirmation. Their sense of the proprieties, if not a personal dislike of the man himself, constrained them to hesitate, while their constituents, wholly out of sympathy with that form of politics, urged them to resistance. But a canvass of the Senate soon taught them that a refusal to confirm meant a hold-up of all measures helpful to their districts. Indeed, for several days appeals amounting to threats certified to the vehemence of the Governor's interest in the matter. In extenuation, his friends explained that Payn not only secured Black's nomination, but had demanded the office. Moreover, that it would be unwise to judge the Governor's standard of official conduct by a single appointment, or to believe that the "intolerant clamour" of constituents would prevent confirmation. To closet legislators when confronted with a situation of supreme difficulty and drug them with visions of power were familiar to the machine politician, who usually had his way. But nine senators, refusing to be coerced, did not flinch from voting against confirmation,⁴ and although in the end their legislation suffered proscription, it seemed to help their political careers, two of them, Higgins and White, subsequently becoming Governor of the State.

With similar independence Black continued to let it be known that he was Governor. He cut off one hundred helpers in the Capitol, ostensibly in the interest of economy; he favoured Senator Raines' amendments to the Raines Liquor Law, which destroyed fake hotels and otherwise strengthened the law in the interest of morals; he opposed a bi-partisan police board for Greater New York; he side-tracked Senator Ellsworth's anti-cartoon bill that proved pleasing to the press; he failed to visit Platt at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, suggesting that Albany was the seat of Gov-

⁴ George A. Davis, Erie; Frank M. Higgins, Allegany; George W. Brush and Albert A. Wray, Kings; Frank D. Pavey, New York; Le Grand Tibbits, Hoosac; Joseph Mullen, Jefferson; Lester H. Humphrey, Warsaw; Horace White, Onondaga.

ernment; and he withered the efforts of Lauterbach, chairman of the New York County Committee, who, among other things, favoured the bi-partisan police board and opposed the Raines Law amendments. Having thus seated himself in the saddle, he proceeded to create a "starchless" civil service which should square with "common-sense."

The State constitution, adopted in 1894, provided that "appointments and promotions in the civil service shall be made according to merit and fitness to be ascertained, so far as practicable, by examinations, which, so far as practicable, shall be competitive."⁵ In an early test case the Court of Appeals intimated that the Legislature had complete control of the details, and acting upon this authority, the Governor, without that information which comes through frequent conferences with the experienced friends of civil service reform, drafted a bill of his own. It provided separate examinations for "merit" and "fitness," the former, conducted by the civil service board, to be written and competitive, the latter written or oral according to the wish of the appointing official, who made the examination. It also limited the rating in each case not to exceed fifty per cent, and abolished all existing eligible lists, which at that time contained eighteen hundred and eighty-eight names. Under the old law the civil service board certified to the appointing officer the three names highest on the list, from which he must select. The Black bill required all applicants passing the "merit" examination to appear before the appointing officer for a "fitness" examination whenever a vacancy occurred. This enabled the head of a department, if so disposed, to take the lowest "merit" man and give him the highest "fitness" rate, thus opening a broad highway to political or personal favouritism. Under it Payn and Aldridge became experts in picking whom they wanted, with little or no attention to their previous record. Indeed, the administration of the law became so offensive that the Governor himself subsequently refused to allow an amend-

⁵ Art. 5, Sec. 9.

ment to the Greater New York Charter extending its application to that city, then under the control of Richard Croker.

This autocratic course, so early exhibited in his administration, created widespread disaffection. Civil service reform had been established after years of struggle. The great Republican defeat in 1882 gave it a generous boost, and so thoroughly did the party commit itself to the reform in 1884 that George William Curtis prophesied that "henceforth political managers will not openly oppose popular demands, and no backward steps will be taken in maintaining it." A few days before his retirement, Governor Morton, in certifying one hundred and sixteen new places under competitive examination, declared that "the utility of civil service principles as applied to administrative offices will be readily conceded by most persons who have had experience in public affairs." But Governor Black, in the interest of "common-sense," dared to take a long step backward, and jammed his measure through the Legislature as he did the confirmation of his superintendent of insurance. Morton had made unpopular appointments and approved objectionable measures, but the people believed he did so under duress. Black acted upon his own initiative, his summary manner indicating a love of power that is jealous of an attempt to weaken it. This bred a distrust that fine speeches could not remove.

In the meantime Senator Platt adjusted his relations with the President. Their differences in the preceding year, if silenced, did not entitle him to special privileges, whereas the men who supported McKinley militant expected their rewards from McKinley triumphant. The appointment of Cornelius S. Bliss as secretary of the interior roughened the way. Of the insurgents who had opposed his leadership none was more active or offensive. Moreover, it opened a wide door for the appointment of other famous citizens of similar character. Horace Porter became an ambassador to France, Andrew D. White went to Berlin,⁶

⁶ See p. 149.

Joseph H. Choate to the Court of St. James, and Stewart L. Woodford to Spain. Though burning with indignation, the Senator exercised great tact. If he should secretly obstruct confirmation he knew it would be truthfully ascribed to sinister or selfish reasons, and if he threw down the gauge publicly he would be defeated, for he had learned to his humiliation that Mark Hanna was something of a boss himself. So he placidly accepted the situation, until the kind-hearted President, who never cherished animosities or nursed resentments, finally yielded him not only the post-office at New York, but the collectorship of the port, an office the disposition of which had for many years been recognised as the crucial test of an Administration's favour. Formerly it was a key to the control of the machine, which filled it with deputy collectors, cashiers, weighers, and a multitude of other subordinates, who could be appointed or displaced by the Collector at will. But in recent years this privilege, through the application of civil service reform, had practically vanished. Yet the prestige of the office, as it existed in the days of Senator Conkling, still clung to it, and its capture by Senator Platt comforted an army of place-hunters, if its importance politically did not deceive the organisation leaders.

To Platt, however, the big game of the season was Greater New York. No reason except politics then existed for such a tie-up. Nothing in the city's condition made it necessary; nor had the citizens of the adjoining boroughs asked it. The scheme, as heretofore stated, was hatched in secret, jammed through the preceding Legislature with the help of Tammany senators, and approved by Governor Morton with the threat of a loss of the Presidency. Subsequently, he appointed five commissioners to draft a Charter. This document as prepared renewed the fierce opposition of the preceding year. Roosevelt inveighed against a bi-partisan police board; leading bodies representing property and business interests protested against the enormous expense made inevitable by many new offices with big salaries and

large forces of subordinates to carry the borough and other systems into effect; while the Bar Association, pronouncing it a "deplorable" outcome, expressed the belief that it "would give rise to mischiefs far outweighing any benefits which may reasonably be expected to flow from it." As a final protest, Mayor Strong, after hearing benefits and objections, disapproved it. Moreover, the belief generally obtained among legislators that Tammany would elect the first Mayor and thus enrich itself with the spoils so abundantly provided. This aroused the hope that Platt himself would realise the political unwisdom of hurrying it, since it would inject a new issue into the fall campaign and endanger the State election. But the Senator demanded its passage, and the influences that seated him in the Senate rushed it through the Legislature without debate or amendment by a vote large enough to overcome the Mayor's veto.

The Governor yearned to disapprove it. He thought it "bad politics," and the fear of a Tammany victory in November troubled him. He knew that although Tammany exploited its opposition to the measure, it had rallied to its support whenever defeat threatened it. When thirty-six Republican assemblymen voted "no," Tammany rescued it. Again, after Mayor Strong's veto had increased the opposition in the Senate from four to eleven, Tammany furnished the needed votes to pass it. "Why the Republicans advocated the bill is a mystery," said John C. Sheehan, then acting leader of Tammany. "We wanted it all the time. Our boasted opposition was simply a blind."⁷ Thus the more the Governor studied it the less he liked it. It created five apparently unnecessary offices,⁸ while the Municipal Assembly, composed of two houses of eighty-nine members, carrying a salary list of \$120,000, seemed of slight value to the taxpayers. The cost of running a consolidated depart-

⁷ *New York Tribune*, December 15, 1897.

⁸ Each borough had a president, with a salary of \$5,000, in Manhattan, Bronx and Brooklyn, and \$3,000 in Richmond and Queens.

ment, too, exceeded by thousands of dollars the combined cost of the several departments before the merger. This did not fit his ideas of economy as expressed in his message. Besides, although created professedly to give a larger measure of home rule, it invited ambitious legislative grafters to amend its charter. What the future might develop, therefore, he did not know, but as the Bar Association pointed out he saw much room for "mischief." Still, the Governor hesitated. He faced the situation pictured in his inaugural statement.—"I trust that no man believes the attitude of fear is worthy to play a part in the discharge of any public duty." It made him squirm and wobble, but fear of Platt's combine and the failure of a renomination finally broke his well-sounding phrase. So he signed the Charter without giving his reasons, and sent the pen to Senator Platt as a symbol of his vassalage. Until then he was considered to have stuff in him.

The Charter having become a law, the Citizens' Union, under the leadership of Fulton Cutting, began circulating petitions asking Seth Low to become a non-partisan candidate for mayor. Low needed no introduction to the citizens of Greater New York. His administration as Mayor of Brooklyn testified to his fitness as an executive, while his perfect knowledge of the Charter, which, as a commissioner, he had assisted in drafting, peculiarly qualified him for establishing the new government. The action of the Citizens Union, therefore, quickly became a surprising success, upward of one hundred thousand qualified voters registering their allegiance to the volunteer popular movement, with the double purpose of selecting Low and preventing the nomination of another anti-Tammany candidate. When one hundred and thirty-seven thousand approved signatures appeared, Low wrote a letter of acceptance, saying that he regarded it such an imperative mandate from the people that, as a patriot, he could not refuse to obey it, since it expressed their desire to have Greater New York begin its career under officials who would make its welfare their first

concern. In stressing non-partisanship his idea differed from Mayor Strong's. The latter recognised the factions which elected him, and too often selected officials with more regard to former support than to fitness. Low said, "The patronage of the city shall not be used, so far as it is in the Mayor's power to prevent it, for the purpose of either strengthening or weakening one party or another, or any faction of a party, but I will fill every place with a single eye to the public good." In other words, appointments to office would depend solely upon fitness, regardless of creed, or of belief in gold, silver, protection or free-trade.

At the outset party leaders seemed willing that the Citizens Union should start an anti-Tammany movement, thus giving the campaign a moral tone which would arouse the people to stand for good government. But the discovery that it came as a substitute for any other form of selecting candidates, especially as a studied plan to rid the city of machine conventions, astonished if it did not alarm party managers. Nothing like it had ever been known before, and the more they tried to break it, the more numerous the petitioners became. These registered voters represented Democrats, Republicans and Socialists, all of whom, acting as non-partisans, refused either to join a coalition of factions such as had selected Mayor Strong in 1894, or to support a candidate nominated by a party convention. Nor could any inducement shake Low. He felt sure of his backing, and the more he preached the principle of good government, separated from State and National issues and from independent party organisations, the stronger he grew. As a final compromise effort Platt sent Lemuel E. Quigg to Elihu Root with the proposition that if Low, waiting until the Republican convention met, would then accept both nominations, preferably in identical terms, he would "try" to bring about his nomination. Quigg was a likable young journalist of agreeable manners, and a member of Congress, who talked well. He had a mellow voice, a happy way of putting things, sometimes full of fire, often rising to eloquence, and always

interesting. But his assertions as chairman of the New York Republican City Committee, even though made with a pleasing smile, left an impression of exaggerated importance. Of Quigg's advisers the *Tribune* (October 31) said: "There is Gruber whose fame rests on his attacks on civil service reform. There is Gibbs whose trading with Tammany is a matter of official record. There is 'Mike' Dady, well known for his aversion to reform and his admiration of McKane. There is Lauterbach, who prefers a Tammany mayor to a non-partisan one. There is Platt himself, who ordered his own newspaper to support Gilroy." To this group Root's assistance would be of the highest value. No other man outranked him in judgment, in breadth of view, or in that peculiar kind of fresh common-sense that illuminated any subject to which he applied it. The fact that Platt sought his aid, as a sick man in extremis summons the most skilful physician, proved his standing. He was not a reformer; but with a cool head, if not a warm heart, he looked at things unaffected by partisan motives. When Quigg closed the interview he felt like a Greek bearing gifts, for Root had applied his doctrine of common-sense. Of course, as Platt afterwards put it, "nothing came of this communication."

This put the Republican organisation in an embarrassing situation. Low's petitioners represented a majority of the anti-Tammany voters and fully one-fourth of Greater New York's total vote, more than one-half of whom were Republicans. Moreover, not all of Low's endorsers could be brought to the support of a straight Republican candidate, while most if not all machine Republicans, if Platt said the word, would back Low. To endorse Low, therefore, made his election absolutely certain; to put a Republican candidate into the field meant the probable turning over to a Tammany mayor the privilege of setting in motion a colossal system of municipal government, with practically unrestricted control of the selection of the men who would administer it. The question of splitting the anti-Tammany

vote in the middle, therefore, became a serious problem, since it involved not only the control of Greater New York, but the election of a chief judge of the Court of Appeals.⁹ Speaking with courage, the *Tribune* (September 2) declared that "whoever advises or demands a policy that ends in the election of a Tammany Democrat for mayor will be held not only an enemy to honest municipal government, but the worst of enemies to the Republican party."

Platt admitted the Citizens' Union represented a worthy, courageous movement, but he objected to the "arrogant and offensive" course it had adopted toward a powerful anti-Tammany ally whose co-operation was absolutely necessary to its success. It said, in effect: Take Low on our terms or suffer the consequences. Platt never liked to be bullied. Bosses never do. It must be admitted, too, that Fulton Cutting, although probably animated by unselfish motives, displayed the characteristic qualities of a boss. In mitigation Cutting said that in fighting a boss necessity compelled the use of a boss's methods.

Platt's controlling reason for his final action, however, sourced in his distrust of Seth Low. Their views were antipodal. As a commissioner to draft the Charter he had advocated, as Roosevelt did, a single legislative chamber, a one-headed police department, and a separate board of elections. As a candidate he had surrounded himself with conspicuously able men, some of whom Platt pronounced "humbugs and cranks," lacking in political experience. His doctrine as a non-partisan in municipal government, Platt held "in the sincerest and profoundest contempt." The Senator expressed the fear, too, that having behind him no strong, united party with a well-settled policy, Low, if

⁹ As only a chief judge of the Court of Appeals was to be elected in 1897, it was decided not to hold State conventions, the Republican and Democratic State committees selecting as candidates for that office United States Circuit Judge William J. Wallace of Syracuse and Supreme Court Judge Alton B. Parker of Kingston. The latter was endorsed by Tammany and the Sound Money Democrats.

elected, would be bamboozled by "easy-going, thoughtless aristocrats," going to him in the guise of independent, non-partisan patriots, claiming to have aided him in saving the city from the fangs of the Tiger. Visions also disturbed him of friction between the city administration and the Legislature, and of "newspapers grinding out columns" in admiration of the Citizens' Union and to the prejudice of the Republican party, possibly resulting in the defeat of a Republican governor in 1898. But his most serious, if not the one controlling objection, originated in Low's "repudiation of all obligation to the Republican party," while the conditions of his nomination, necessarily controlling his conduct in office, must make him "a constant thorn in the flesh to the Republican organisation in both city and State."¹⁰

The organisation was sacred to the Senator. His fidelity resembled the faithfulness of a champion of authority against reason or innovation. He did not merely object to what failed to fit into his system; he hated it. To him even a Tammany mayor seemed better than Low, since Croker would at least allow him to name the two commissioners on a bi-partisan police-board. So he said the word, and a Republican organisation convention (September 18) nominated Benjamin F. Tracy,¹¹ on a platform which included national, State, and local issues. Tracy was Platt's original choice. As one of the commissioners to draft the charter, he had advocated a bi-partisan police-board, with its control of the election bureau. No one imagined Fulton Cutting could control Low, but people generally understood that Platt would manage Tracy. Yet Tracy had serious doubts about the propriety of a divisive ticket. "If it shall hereafter appear that my candidacy stands in the way of promoting harmony," he said in his acceptance speech, "I wish permission to adopt the course my judgment commends, for nothing could be more hateful to me than the knowledge that

¹⁰ Platt, *Autobiography*, pp. 357-366.

¹¹ Tracy 297; Low 49.

I had perversely stood in the way of a complete union of all possible elements of opposition to Tammany Hall."

On learning that the anti-Tammany forces had divided, Richard Croker hastened to New York. When Tammany went out of power he handed the reins to John C. Sheehan and sailed for England, where, rumour said, losses in horse-racing and horse-farming had depleted the fortune built up, it was facetiously stated, through "real estate speculation" during the days of Tammany's supremacy. Now that new riches seemed in sight, he hurried home to take personal charge of the mayoralty campaign. Before his arrival Judge Gaynor, a notable citizen, loyal to party but fearless and independent, had developed flattering strength, especially in Kings, Queens, and Richmond Counties. To Croker, however, loyalty meant unfailing obedience to a boss, and after surveying the field he picked out Robert Van Wyck, judge of a minor court, whose conviviality, rather than knowledge either of the law or of city affairs, commended him. This selection offended the Sound Money Democrats, who held a city convention and endorsed Low by a vote of 337 to 261 for Van Wyck, the former receiving the votes of Brooklyn, Queens and Richmond, with a majority of eight assembly districts in New York. Subsequently, through a deal stigmatised as "disreputable," former Mayor Grace committed the Sound Money Democrats of New York County to the support of Van Wyck in return for a Supreme Court nomination for Francis M. Scott. In excuse Grace, to whom the split in the anti-Tammany forces seemed absolutely fatal, pleaded his desire to elect at least one clean, respectable man.

Another and even greater surprise was the nomination of Henry George by a body of independents calling themselves Jeffersonian or Bryan Democrats. After many years of seclusion, George's reappearance greatly disturbed Tammany. It recalled his former alarming vote, and although he did not now appear as a "social economist," his thrusts at Croker and Platt, using the thought and language of the

streets, crowded the halls wherever he spoke. The striking demonstration at his death, which came suddenly in the heat of the forceful campaign, indicated the popular attachment. His son was immediately substituted as the candidate.

As the canvass progressed the Republican organisation sought to discredit the Citizens' Union by excluding the Low ticket from the official ballot, and to gain prestige as the favoured faction of President McKinley, secured Cornelius N. Bliss to preside at one of its meetings. Bliss had never admired Platt. Only the year before he pronounced him a politician "who deliberately acts so as to make it impossible for self-respecting men to be allied with him even for a good purpose." But he had confidence in Tracy. A meeting of wider influence, however, which attracted the attention of State and country, was soon after held in Low's interest and addressed by Elihu Root, Joseph H. Choate, Mayor Strong, and other loyal Republicans of high repute. In their opinion a non-partisan body of men, standing for a city government solely in the interest of the people, was adequately bound together by common opinions and common interests, and that with Low, pledged only to supply the city with good government, it could vindicate the supremacy of popular interests better and more surely than any one chosen by a party controlled by a personal machine.

Robert Van Wyck, for reasons best known to his backers, did not appear in the canvass. Tammany's star orators did the talking, while Hugh Grant managed the details with rare skill. Indeed, for several days before the election little doubt as to the result in Greater New York existed in the minds of Democrats and observing Republicans. The city was deeply stirred, and the friction between the Low and Tracy leaders had become very noticeable. In the State at large, however, Republicans continued confident. Indeed, the Democrats originally regarded the result so doubtful that Hill advised Parker to refuse the offered nomination for the Court of Appeals. But in this as in other matters

he exercised his own judgment. Although he had repeatedly declined political office, the highest judicial position in the State strongly attracted him. Besides, he would lose nothing if defeated, as he would retain the judgeship then held. In this respect Judge Wallace was no less fortunate. His devotion to Senator Conkling during Grant's administration won him the appointment of United State District Judge and his subsequent promotion to the Circuit Court. With all their limitations both candidates were wholly true men, who would attract a straight party support. Unfortunately for Wallace, however, his vote in Greater New York, due to the antagonism between Tracy and Low, dropped to 140,000, while Parker, receiving the united Democratic and disaffected Citizens' Union vote, polled 278,000, giving him a plurality in the State of 62,879. In the Greater New York Mayoralty contest, Van Wyck had a plurality of 132,124 over Tracy. Low's vote exceeded Tracy's by 49,677. In New York City Tracy polled only 55,000 votes, 5,000 less than Roosevelt in 1886 and 18,000 less than Erhart in 1888. This reaction was not confined solely to Greater New York. The cities of Albany, Binghamton, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo elected Democratic mayors, while Democratic assemblymen increased from 36 to 68. To Republicans it was a crushing blow.¹² "Platt's 'leadership' is a costly handicap to the Republican party," said Reid. Hill voiced his party's feeling in a telegram to Parker: "There's a hot time in the old State to-night." Platt remained silent. For months he seemed a depressed figure, loaded with the consciousness of being solely responsible for the overwhelming defeat of his party. The belief existed that his subsequent acquiescence in Roosevelt's nomination for Governor sourced in an unwillingness to chance the repetition of such another disaster.

¹² Parker's vote, 555,137; Wallace, 492,258; Van Wyck, 233,997; Low, 151,540; Tracy, 101,863; George, 19,864. Legislature: Senate, Reps. 35, Dems. 14, Ind. 1; Assembly, Reps. 79, Dems. 68, Ind. 3.

CHAPTER XXIX

ROOSEVELT ATTACKS CROKER AND WINS THE GOVERNORSHIP

1898

WHEN the Legislature convened in January, 1898, Democrats and Republicans began introducing bills to amend the Greater New York Charter. Their number and character at once aroused a suspicion of "deals" for the purpose of sharing in the patronage of the new government, especially as some of these measures would wipe out Mayor Strong's reforms and restore old Tammany practices. Notable among the "deal bills" were proposals to abolish the new City Magistrate's Court, which provided that no person should be eligible to that bench who had not practised law for at least five years; to restore the old Police Justice system that required only two years' experience as a lawyer; to legislate out of office Mayor Strong's Board of Education; to substitute for the non-political Rapid Transit Commission a bi-partisan body to be appointed by Mayor Van Wyck; and to extend Governor Black's "starchless" civil service law to the city.

The Governor's astonishing indifference to public opinion, however, had undergone a great change since the defeat of the preceding year. The startling rapidity with which the people resented bad legislation, unsatisfactory appointments, and the fatal mismanagement of the mayoralty candidacy in Greater New York, opened his eyes to their passionate interest in wise government, and early in the legislative session he served notice that he would not approve any measures amending New York's charter except such as might be found essential to its proper functioning. Moreover, he agreed

with the Attorney-General that his starchless civil service law did not apply to cities, and notified the authorities to drop the "fitness" examination and select appointees according to the former merit system. As further evidence of the sincerity of his repentance, he secured through the exercise of his power the passage of a new primary system for Greater New York, advocated, if not invented, by Republicans who had revolted from machine leadership in the preceding election. This system permitted any registered voter to participate in a primary election by declaring before a notary public his intention of supporting the nominees and filing such declaration with the bureau of elections. This notable change afforded all voters an opportunity to enroll on the regular days of registration, and in recognition of its fairness, the anti-machine Republican organisation immediately disbanded. Having accomplished these reforms, the Governor managed to close the legislative session on the last day of March. "Not since Mr. Cleveland was governor," said the *Nation* (April 7), "have we had as the result of a winter's work a smaller amount of bad legislation." Nevertheless, the Spring town elections, which usually foreshadowed the outcome in November, gave ominous warnings. In twenty-five counties the Democrats gained seventy-five supervisors. Even in Owego, the home town of Senator Platt, the Democrats had elected a supervisor for the first time in many years.

At this time, however, little doubt existed as to Black's renomination. His opposition to some of the so-called "deal" bills had angered Quigg and Gibbs, and disturbed Platt; but Lauterbach stood firm, while most of the organisation leaders in the up-state counties remained constant. Indeed, the Governor's only serious annoyance sourced in the work of Payn and Aldridge, who did not readily comply with the civil service law. In nine months Payn created thirteen confidential examiners in the Insurance Department, which formerly had two. For this and other evasions of the statute the Civil Service Reform Association publicly censured him.

In the selection of his subordinates for canal work, Aldridge paid scant attention to the law. For superintendent of the middle division he appointed a man with a prison record, who in turn selected two others of similar record. The "fitness" of some others did not exalt the standard. But not until the action of James A. Roberts, the able and intrepid State comptroller, who refused to allow their pay, was sustained by the Court of Appeals, did the Superintendent of Public Works change his methods. Subsequently, when the exhaustion of the nine millions voted to complete the canal improvement forced him to ask the Legislature to appropriate an additional seven millions, the Comptroller refused to endorse the request. "We have no right to assume," he said, "that the people would have authorised the expenditure of nine millions had they realised that it would only half do the work." This controversy, raising the question of what had become of the nine millions, soon developed into a State-wide scandal. Press and people demanded an investigation, and when the Governor hesitated, the accusations, stimulated by the well-known character of some of Aldridge's subordinates, already advertised in the reports of the Civil Service Reform Association, became doubly sensational. Finally Black appointed an investigating commission, whose report appeared in the latter part of July (1898): "The facts we have ascertained," it said, "account for the improper expenditure of \$1,000,000, exclusive of moneys paid out for ordinary and extraordinary repairs which amount to not less than \$1,500,000." It also stated that "improper expenditures" could have been prevented by proper administration, adding: "The failure to so act unites the Superintendent of Public Works with the State Engineer in a common responsibility." It did not appear, however, that Aldridge personally profited. Nor did the investigation in any wise connect the Governor with knowledge of the improper doings. But the lax methods, the prodigal expenditure for the work done, and the "improper" transactions caused severe criticism and excited

serious doubts of Black's availability as a candidate for renomination.

Meantime, the Spanish-American War, declared in the preceding April, had directed popular attention to another. Theodore Roosevelt had resigned as police commissioner in May, 1897, to accept the office of assistant secretary of the navy, and with his usual energy he began putting the Navy into readiness for war, which he hoped would come. "I had preached," he said, "with all the fervour and zeal I possessed our duty to intervene in Cuba and to take this opportunity of driving the Spaniards from the Western World."¹ Says the Secretary of the Navy: "He was heart and soul in his work. His typewriters had no rest. He was especially stimulating to the younger officers who gathered about him and made his office as busy as a hive. He was especially helpful in the purchasing of ships and in every line where he could push on the work of preparation for war."

Among other things he began organising the Rough Riders, and shortly after the declaration of war resigned the secretaryship (May 6) and entered the army as the lieutenant-colonel of the First United States Cavalry Volunteers or "Rough-Riders," preferring and insisting that Surgeon Leonard Wood be its Colonel.² Knowing that army operations would begin at Santiago, he shrewdly got his regiment aboard the first ships that sailed, and being promptly disembarked he early participated in the fighting. There was some blundering and not a little criticism in army circles and elsewhere; but he was commended for gallantry at the battle of San Juan Hill (July 1) and promoted to a colonelcy.

Roosevelt's part in the famous battle quickly resulted in the mention of his name for governor. It added a popular quality to his record for executive ability, independence, and practical reform, which, in the opinion of the independent or anti-Platt element, were especially needed at that time. On the other hand, organisation leaders, with

¹ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 237.

² *Ibid.*, p. 254.

a few notable exceptions, regarded him with suspicion.³ Platt thoroughly disliked him, and to Payn and Aldridge and Lauterbach he was unthinkable. But Benjamin B. Odell, then chairman of the Republican State committee, warned by the recent town elections and the growing canal scandal, thought only of success. He did not minimise the perils that beset the way to victory in November, and without the knowledge of Platt he had a letter written to Roosevelt, then in Cuba, suggesting that his chances for the nomination seemed good if he carefully avoided political complications in his interviews and utterances. Roosevelt promptly acquiesced, and Odell began preparing the way, or "pestering" Platt, to use the latter's word.

At his first interview Platt turned the proposition down flatly. He declared Roosevelt a disturber of political harmony, who, instead of following organisation lines, would do as he pleased. Nobody could control him, and as a conquering hero he would be more obnoxious than ever. However, Odell stood firmly. He would not lead a losing campaign and in his opinion defeat would surely follow the nomination of Governor Black, while Roosevelt might win. Platt had disagreed with Odell in the Greater New York controversy, and although he still relied upon Payn, who despised Roosevelt and supported Black, he hesitated to desert the new chairman of the State Committee. Odell was a man of few words, never rude, although not quickly sympathetic, but firm and even-tempered, with high courage, and a rather unusual capacity for getting at the heart of any matter. He knew what was going on, whom to trust, and how to keep the friends that measured up to his requirements. It is now known that in assuming to nominate Roosevelt, he was beginning very quietly and tactfully to

³ "Foremost among the leaders who pressed me on Mr. Platt were Mr. Quigg, Mr. Odell, and Mr. John R. Hazel of Buffalo, now United States Judge. Judge Hazel did not know me personally, but he felt the sentiment of his city demanded my nomination." Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 294.

take the reins of organisation leadership, without advertising it or humiliating Platt.

Seven weeks after the date of Odell's letter Roosevelt landed with his troops at Montauk Point, and so well had Odell's leaven worked that a day or two later Platt allowed Quigg to sound the dashing Colonel on the governorship. Quigg was not a stranger to the Colonel. While upon the staff of the New York *Tribune* his duties brought him into friendly relations with the then Police Commissioner, which continued during the latter's connection with the Navy. "Quigg spoke very frankly to me," wrote Roosevelt, "stating that he earnestly desired to see me nominated and believed the great body of Republican voters in the State so desired, but that the organisation and the State convention would finally do what Senator Platt desired. He said that county leaders were already coming to Senator Platt, hinting at a close election, expressing doubt of Governor Black's availability for re-election, and asking why it would not be a good thing to nominate me. For this reason he wanted a plain statement as to whether I wanted the nomination, and what, in the event of my nomination and election, would be my attitude toward the organisation,—whether I would 'make war' on Mr. Platt and his friends, or would confer with them and the organisation leaders generally, and give fair consideration to their point of view as to party policy and public interest. He said he had not come to make me any offer of the nomination and had no authority to do so, nor to get any pledges or promises. He simply wanted a frank definition of my attitude toward existing party conditions.

"To this I replied I would like to be nominated, and if nominated would promise to throw myself into the campaign with all possible energy. I said I should not make war on Mr. Platt or anybody else if war could be avoided: that I wanted to be Governor and not a faction leader; that I certainly would confer with organisation men as with everybody else who seemed to me to have knowledge of and

interest in public affairs, and that as to Mr. Platt and the organisation leaders, I would do so in the sincere hope that there might always result harmony of opinion and purpose; but that while I would try to get on well with the organisation, it must with equal sincerity strive to do what I regarded as essential for the public good; and that in every case, after full consideration of what everybody had to say who might possess real knowledge of the matter, I should have to act finally as my own judgment and conscience dictated, and administer the State government as I thought it ought to be administered. Quigg said that this was precisely what he supposed I would say, that it was all anybody could expect, and that he would state it to Senator Platt precisely as I had put it to him.”⁴

Quigg’s message as repeated to Platt veered somewhat from the original, and Roosevelt wired (September 12): “I don’t like the wording of some of your sentences. For instance, instead of saying that I would not ‘wish’ to be a figure-head, you should have used the word ‘consent.’ Then I wish you could have brought out the fact that these statements were not in the nature of bids for the nomination or of pledges by me. In short, I want to make clear that there was no question of pledges or promises, least of all a question of bargaining for the nomination; but that I promptly told you the position I would take if I was elected Governor, and suggested what I thought it would be best for both Senator Platt and myself to do to prevent the chance of any smash-up. I was not making any agreement as to what I would do on consideration that I received the nomination; I was stating the course which I thought it would be best to follow for the sake of the party and the State—both considerations outweighing infinitely the question of my own nomination.”⁵

It is easy to believe that this kind of talk did not please

⁴ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, pp. 294-5.

⁵ Washburn, *Life of Roosevelt*, pp. 28-9.

Platt. Nor did the later statement that he must have direct personal relations with everybody, and get their views at first hand whenever he so desired, because he could not have one man speaking for all.⁶ Meantime Lauterbach and other organisation friends of Governor Black put up a stiff fight. It greatly encouraged them that such anti-machine men as former Lieutenant-Governor Saxton, Charles H. Hubbell, president of the Board of Education in New York, and William Brookfield, another friend of Mayor Strong, declared for Black. Hubbell based his support upon the Governor's opposition to "deal" legislation; Brookfield thought his approval of the Primary Reform Act entitled him to a renomination; while Saxton disbelieved in sacrificing a man who had the courage to modify his civil service policy, when convinced by experiment of its un wisdom. Reports from Albany, New York, Brooklyn and other parts of the State declared his strength increasing.

With Platt uncertain, the Saratoga convention only two weeks off, and Roosevelt still in camp at Montauk Point, the work of winning organisation support fell largely upon Odell. His action did not escape criticism. Lauterbach grumbled, Payn charged that he had a grievance, and the Governor personally resented his interference. In accounting for Odell's interest in him, Roosevelt said: "Mr. Odell, who hardly knew me personally, felt that Governor Black could not be re-elected, and as he had just taken the State chairmanship he was very anxious to win a victory." It jolted Odell when the story got abroad that Roosevelt, to avoid personal taxes in New York, had made an affidavit on March 21, 1898, declaring that he had no residence in New York City and did not vote there at the last election; that in October, 1897, he moved to Washington with his family and had ever since resided there. This it was claimed disqualified him from becoming Governor under the State Con-

⁶ *Autobiography*, p. 296.

stitution, which provides that no person shall be eligible to the office of Governor or Lieutenant-Governor who shall not have been five years next preceding his election a resident of this State.⁷

Very naturally the report spread rapidly, and for the moment comforted the Governor and his friends as much as it worried Roosevelt and his supporters. A suspicion existed that Black's friends had purposely sprung it at the eleventh hour. At any rate, their delight seemed too effusive, especially as it blended Roosevelt's non-residence with whispers of his being a tax-dodger. To proclaim these glad tidings Lauterbach hastened to Senator Platt's office, but was astounded to find that Odell, who had already sifted the story, insisted upon Roosevelt's nomination, since the affidavit in no wise affected his eligibility. To quiet any misapprehension, however, Elihu Root was delegated to explain the matter to the convention.

Upon its assembling the cheers for Platt, of whom it was said "age had mellowed," exceeded those for the absent Roosevelt. Indeed, in comparison, the applause for the hero of San Juan Hill seemed feeble. But everybody gave rapt attention to the explanation of Root, who submitted proof, based upon Roosevelt's letters, that after the latter built his house in 1884 at Oyster Bay he had used it continuously as his home. There he voted and paid taxes. Its doors had always been open. "It is a well settled and familiar law," said Root, "that there are two kinds of residence, one permanent which makes citizenship: another, which consists in actual physical presence in a place other than a man's domicile. Our court of last resort has decided that the word 'residence' when it refers to eligibility to office, means domicile, a permanent, legal residence, and has no reference to the question of where a man is actually living. Roosevelt resided in Washington as assistant secretary of the navy, and nothing is better settled than that residence for

⁷ Art. 4, Sec. 2.

the purpose of performing duties in the public service is a temporary residence which does not affect one's domicile or legal residence." In closing, he said: "Gentlemen, Colonel Roosevelt would not have your suffrage or that of the people of the State, if there was a doubt of his eligibility to be Governor. But he should not be deprived of citizenship without his will. He should not lose his birthright without fault. He would not retire from the contest for this honour because of charges which are not true. He would not give up his State, and the people of the State will not surrender the precious possession of his citizenship, the splendid energy of his character and his noble heroism in civic and military life, that carries him unflinchingly against the storms of public opinion and the storms of death, which are a heritage for our people and our children and our children's children, which we cannot afford to surrender. The possession is too valuable for us to question his title to it."

After this statement all doubt of eligibility disappeared as suddenly as it arose; but it did not unite the organisation leaders, Odell and Quigg favouring Roosevelt, and Lauterbach and Payn supporting Black, with Platt acquiescing in their disagreement. However, on the surface things were calm. The convention recognised the party's precarious condition, and while most of the delegates preferred an out-and-out organisation candidate, nearly all conceded that hope of victory depended largely upon Roosevelt's nomination, whose heroic service in the war had captivated the popular imagination. Still, there was no wish to humiliate the Governor. In making his statement Root "deemed it a privilege" to declare the Governor's action as a candidate as "manly, straightforward, frank, and open as it always had been as a Governor." In a similar vein the candidates were presented. With compliments for Black, the brilliant Depew placed Roosevelt in nomination, and with compliments for Roosevelt, the sturdy Saxton presented the Governor's name. The roll-call resulted: Roosevelt, 753; Black, 218. Other nominations, except that of John C. Davies for

attorney-general, followed by acclamation.⁸ The independent press declared it a machine convention and an anti-machine ticket. There seemed much truth in the statement, since it refused to listen to protests against Davies, who, as assistant attorney-general, had allied himself with Comptroller Roberts, whose firmness had upheld the merit system and forced the canal investigation.

The platform, presented by Stewart L. Woodford, endorsed the Federal and State administrations; congratulated the President for his policy with Spain; praised the Army and Navy for conducting the war to a speedy close; approved the retention of the Philippine Islands; favoured the expansion of the currency on a gold basis; approved the work of the Legislature; and pledged a fearless investigation of the "alleged" mismanagement of the canals. "If there are errors in the system and the law we will correct them; if there has been fraud we will expose it and punish the wrongdoers."

The day after the Republican Convention adjourned, the Democratic State Convention assembled at Syracuse (September 30). After Alton B. Parker's election in the preceding year David B. Hill again assumed leadership. His year of retirement had not been one of indolence, but of close observation and secret activity. He had watched the reckless course of Mayor Van Wyck, and had chafed under the dominating influence of Richard Croker, whom he characterised as the "race-track statesman," whose plain purpose centred in the control of the State. As convention day approached, therefore, Hill went to Syracuse full of fight. Although warmly welcomed it was apparent that his leadership had suffered a partial eclipse. His rooms were

⁸ Governor, Theodore Roosevelt, Oyster Bay; Lt.-Gov., Timothy L. Woodruff, Brooklyn; Comptroller, William J. Morgan, Buffalo; Sec. of State, John J. McDonough, Albany; Treasurer, John P. Jaeckel, Auburn; State Engineer, Edward A. Bond, Watertown; Atty.-Gen., John C. Davies, Camden. The ballot for attorney-general stood: Davies, 741; John M. Kellogg, of Ogdensburg, 229.

not the centre of attraction. Ambitious politicians who formerly clustered about him, eager to catch the slightest recognition, if only the mere mention of their names with a handshake, preferred the company of the man backed by the enormous patronage of Greater New York. Few men are sufficiently philosophical to be indifferent to such slights, and after years of prestige, won by sheer force of ability, this change of attitude touched Hill deeply.

But the consciousness of power did not leave him. He still represented the American sentiment of his party as opposed to the foreign sentiment of Tammany, and although his friend, Elliott F. Danforth, chairman of the State committee, found few members venturesome enough to openly antagonise Croker, the trusty scouts conveyed messages and lined up the faithful. When Danforth called the convention to order, therefore, a friend of Hill became temporary chairman, whose tactful selections of committees indicated the former Governor's rare knowledge of men. This was soon shown in the Committee on Credentials, which faced a square issue with Tammany in the seat contests from Erie and Monroe counties. After Hill, with the help of Kings County, had won, his rooms began to fill. In the committee on resolutions he scored again by avoiding the silver issue and circumventing a reaffirmation of the Chicago platform. His bold, experienced hand also exploited itself in the platform's presentation of State issues. It spared no one. It accused Roosevelt of tax-dodging; bitterly arraigned the Republican party for all kinds of rascality in the management of the canals; reproached Secretary of War Alger for his inhumanity in failing to protect the soldiers from disease and suffering, not only in Cuba, but in their camps at home; and denounced in severest terms the recently enacted election bill as an unconstitutional and usurping measure.

Strangely enough this measure, known as the Black election law, had received little attention before or at the time of its passage. It was an effort to prevent illegal voting in Greater New York precincts whenever Tammany attempted

to violate the bi-partisan spirit of the election law, and for that purpose it authorised the State superintendent of elections to appoint, whenever he deemed it necessary, additional election deputies, who had admission to polling places and powers superior to the regular city police. It provoked some criticism as a partisan measure, since it would increase election expenses and likely create disturbance at the polls; but the need of such officials had been manifest in preceding elections, and its enactment excited little opposition. The former Senator, however, cunningly associating it with the recent attempt of Congress to pass a Federal election law, had made it a leading platform issue, calling it the "Metropolitan Force Bill," and proscribing it as "an attack upon Tammany Hall Democracy."

The real purpose of Hill's assault sourced in a desire to please Croker and thus secure his acceptance of an up-state candidate for governor. There was need of a better understanding. For years Hill had jealously opposed Croker's endeavour to control up-state patronage. He did not encroach upon the city, but resented any encroachment upon the State. Indeed, Hill asserted that his place was in Albany and Croker's in New York, and with the help of McLaughlin of Brooklyn he had succeeded in having his way. After Croker's great victory in 1897, however, which gave him supreme control of Greater New York, he showed a disposition to capture the governorship and legislature. Tweed had a similar ambition, and for a time succeeded. John Kelly likewise aspired, but defeated a governor and temporarily destroyed Tammany's influence. Croker possessed their courage, with a superior cunning in making combinations, but hitherto he had failed. Now, however, he secretly planned to name the candidate for governor.

At their first conference Hill suggested Robert Earl of the Court of Appeals, John B. Stanchfield of Elmira and some others. He was not particular, he said, so that the one selected was a man of character, well-equipped by experience, and with a full knowledge of State affairs. Thereupon

Croker suggested D. Cady Herrick of Albany. Hill did not concur, but, without dissenting, tactfully brought the interview to a close. The next morning the convention organised and Hill won the Erie and Monroe contests, apparently giving him control of the convention, with two additional State committeemen. Meanwhile, Croker learned, with the surreptitious aid of Hill, that Herrick was *persona non grata* to many up-state delegates, and at their next conference Croker suggested Mayor Van Wyck of Greater New York. Personally, Hill said, he had no objection to a candidate from the city. But he thought it most desirable, especially this year, to eliminate the prejudice existing in the minds of rural voters against Tammany, and this could be done only by nominating some one outside Greater New York. However absurd and unreasonable such prejudice might be, he continued, it existed in every up-state county, and he thought it unwise and unnecessary thus to handicap the ticket. The Republicans had cast aside everybody who could be connected even remotely with the canal scandal, and with a Greater New York candidate Roosevelt would doubtless make Tammany an issue. It would jeopardise the ticket and ought to be avoided. Croker responded, with some show of heat, that Tammany could carry the city by votes enough to make up for any loss in the rural counties. It needed only a glance to understand that the Tammany chief, resenting Hill's title of "race-track statesman," was in no mood for a compromise.

To Croker's statement Senator Murphy agreed, adding that one assumption was at least as good as the other. Murphy had a real gift of friendship, and his suggestions were helpful so far as the influence of mere amiableness extended; but his ignorance of popular sentiment was notorious, since his intellectual and temperamental affinities drew him to the mercenary side of any question. He believed in the influence of money. In the pending issue, therefore, Hill was neither surprised nor disturbed by his concurrence with Croker. Indeed, it seemed to stiffen the Governor's fol-

lowers, who became more outspoken in their denial of the arrogant statements of the Tammany supporters in up-state counties, whose singular illusions appeared more wonderful than their lack of scruple.

Hill's familiarity with every section of the State, however, came more and more into evidence as he exposed the ignorance of each opponent by asking a few searching questions. In dealing with problems of this kind his memory was extraordinary, and knowing how to reason it is not strange that he had some contempt for those who could only declaim. But his language, though irritating, was guarded. He was playing for big stakes, and those who heard his prophecies, based upon the knowledge of every election for fifteen years, thought it a little short of marvellous that he was never betrayed into inaccuracies. Yet his illuminating suggestions did not conciliate. Anthony M. Brady of Albany, an ally of Croker, who had developed political as well as business acumen, thought it high time for a city candidate to dispossess up-state Democrats of their prejudice. Without the Tammany vote they were helpless, and with it they were often too weak to benefit; whereas an available city candidate could make up rural losses. He maintained, moreover, that where no personal confidence, no friendship, no common interests subsisted between the city and the up-country, neither side could act a public part with uniformity, perseverance, or efficacy. People frequently acquire in party confederacies, he added, a narrow, proscriptive spirit, but in a critical situation such as impends it is our business to keep free from such evils.

Brady belonged to the commercial class. He had no sympathy with an effort to conciliate the counties at the expense of the rich, populous, trading cities, in which individuals could control vast masses of voters. As his words had a visible effect, Hill became more persistent. Finally Hugh McLaughlin suggested Augustus Van Wyck of Brooklyn, a judge of the Supreme Court and for many years McLaughlin's legal adviser. To some it acted as a poultice, since

he was known as an upright, competent judge of pleasing manners, who enjoyed the respect and esteem of his neighbours. But it surprised Hill. It not only disclosed McLaughlin's disposition to part company with him, but it revealed a plot to transfer the Brooklyn Democracy to Tammany, since the Judge was a brother of the Mayor whom Croker controlled. Although it was plain that the suggested change of candidates did not avoid Hill's objections, visions of abundant pecuniary aid and an unlimited supply of patronage unsettled Hill's up-state followers, who gradually drifted away, and in the early hours of the morning Van Wyck's selection became known to the waiting delegates. It was an humiliating failure for Hill, who called the combination the "politics of commerce." It stung him, too, that in the convention his reception was shadowed by Croker's, whose every appearance aroused the delegates to a transport of enthusiasm. But publicly he gracefully accepted the situation. "Originally I doubted the wisdom of taking a candidate for governor from Greater New York," he said, "and personally I have preferred some one of the excellent gentlemen whose names were prominently mentioned, residing in the up-state counties. In the conference the majority thought otherwise, and I yielded my personal views after a full and frank discussion."⁹ However, he had his way in arranging the balance of the ticket, on which appeared for lieutenant-governor the name of Elliott F. Danforth, Maynard's faithful ally in the evil days of the Hill régime.¹⁰

Though deeply disappointed, and, as he believed, greatly handicapped, Hill immediately began a State-wide canvass. After three years of silence he seemed eager to again face a

⁹ *New York World*, September 30, 1898.

¹⁰ The following were the candidates: Governor, Augustus Van Wyck, Kings; Lt.-Gov., Elliott F. Danforth, Chenango; Sec. of State, George W. Batten, Niagara; Comptroller, Edward S. Atwater, Dutchess; Treasurer, Elliott B. Norris, Wayne; Atty.-Gen., Thomas F. Conway, Clinton; Engineer, Martin Schenck, Rensselaer. Frank Campbell of Steuben County took Danforth's place as chairman of the Democratic State Committee.

campaign audience, and everywhere great crowds welcomed him. As usual he delivered the keynote, exhibiting all the showier qualities of speech. Indeed, in the day of his greatest prestige he rarely wielded his trenchant blade with more effect. His treatment of "Algerism" presented a telling picture of the sufferings of diseased and dying soldiers, shut up in typhoid camps, poorly equipped and conspicuously mismanaged, while the canal irregularities afforded material for a scorching review of waste, incompetence, and scandalous blunders. As the days passed a new issue concerning the future of the Philippine Islands gradually shaped itself. Porto Rico had already become a part of the United States, and the speeches of President McKinley indicated a disposition to take the Pacific Archipelago. It raised a question which not only threatened to become a divisive one among Republicans, but for the moment to overshadow all other issues under the general term of "Imperialism." Hill quickly recalled the solemn announcement of Congress that the war was simply a war of liberation and not of conquest. Cuba's close contiguity made it impossible, perhaps, to cast it loose, but the Philippines stood in a different category. They are remote, he said, have in no way troubled our peace, or appealed to us for help against oppression. We have no relations and small commerce with them. Why, then, should we change a war of liberation to one of conquest? He declared the mere suggestion of doing it "a criminal thought." To open the islands to good Republican civilisation might please speculators, who hope to profit, and politicians, who see additional appointments and big salaries; but our people will never forgive an Administration guilty of such false pretences.

Hill's shrewdest move, however, was an invitation to Van Wyck to accompany him in his State-wide campaign. Van Wyck's letter of acceptance commended itself as a frank, adequate presentation of State issues, whose fair professions and promises indicated a man of poise and character. He declared the Raines liquor law "partisan in

its purposes and oppressive in many directions"; he favoured "honest civil-service laws"; and he charged that although "canal frauds" had been proven, the managers of the Republican party refused to accept the Commission's report as conclusive of anything. "When we remember," he added, "that the errors and frauds and partisan misuses of power, traced home and fixed by the commission, were all committed by the supporters, representatives, and followers of the gentlemen who controlled the convention that nominated my opponent, it might seem as if the appeals for a new lease of power were addressed rather to the lovers of comedy than to men with whom the conduct of public affairs is a serious business."

This stinging sentence indicated a clever pen, but the bench had illy prepared him with the power of compelling speech. Under the tutelage of Hill, however, who showed him unusual civilities, piloting him through applauding throngs and putting him at his ease in every disturbing situation, he gained favour and left an impression of fitness for administrative duties.

The Republican campaign naturally centred about Roosevelt. The glamour of the war, as personified by him, made his coming a sort of Fourth of July event, each town, honoured with a visit, displaying flags, mustering all the bands of the neighbourhood, and overcrowding the largest auditorium. He wore the Rough Rider uniform including the long-legged boots, spoke of "our great war," as he was fond of calling it, and gave all who pushed their way through the crowds the hearty hand-shake of an intimate personal friend. It seemed as if every man in the land, judged by appearances, had a vote ready for him. At the outset, in common with other Republican orators, he stressed national issues. The glory of having won the war still kept the blood hot, and although necessarily silent as to "Algerism," since the speech and the condition of home-coming troops affirmed it, his praise of Dewey and Sampson and of San Juan Hill gave volume to the applause of his audiences.

Though the policy of the Administration with respect to the Philippine Archipelago had not yet fruited, a disposition manifested itself to anticipate the outcome by appeals "to follow the flag," and to accept "Destiny" as a duty in the enforcement of the peace-treaty's disposal of the conquered Spanish territory. Roosevelt declared that "to uphold the national honour abroad is the first great principle for this nation."

Of course the anti-imperialists, the anti-militarists, and ultra-pacifists or peace-at-any-price men did not accept his views. "Another knot of extremists," said Roosevelt, "who had ardently insisted that I must be 'forced' on Platt, as soon as Platt supported me, themselves opposed me because he supported me."¹¹ Moreover, opposition to the war was far stronger than generally supposed. One of Senator Platt's reasons for opposing Roosevelt's nomination was the latter's activity in bringing the war about. Perhaps the most serious loss, however, was the hostility of liquor men, many of whom had recently fellowshipped with his party, but now only proclaimed their support of Van Wyck. Roosevelt's hope of success, therefore, depended largely upon reformers and so-called independents, who usually in a close election held the balance of power. But these elements began to lose interest after Roosevelt outlined the course he should pursue as Governor. In treating the canal issue, he said: "The one indispensable requisite in every public servant with whom I have to deal will be honesty. Much has been said as to the mismanagement of the canals. I would in no manner prejudice the case, but if upon investigation I shall find that either the system or the methods of administration are wrong, they shall be changed, and if it shall prove that any man has been dishonest he shall most assuredly be punished." No one doubted Roosevelt's readiness to hunt out and punish dishonesty, but this assumption that canal irregularities needed further proof than had already been pre-

¹¹ *Autobiography*, p. 296.

sented did not satisfy the independent element, which accepted the commission's report as at least proving a wrong system and vicious, if not criminal, methods. It added to their resentment that the Attorney-General, to whom the Governor referred the report, had delayed finding whether criminal prosecution should be instituted, while Lieutenant-Governor Woodruff and other prominent Republican speakers denied the existence of corrupt, extravagant, or reprehensible conduct. Elihu Root, in speaking of Governor Black, declared that "no Republican in the State could come before its people and find a more sincere welcome."¹² If this were true, why had he been set aside? Indeed, to the independent the conduct of the campaign seemed to reveal a determination to succeed by craft, promising reform but denying sins of commission or omission. On the other hand, Van Wyck declared that Governor Black's personally selected commission had disclosed "fraud" and that, if elected, he would go after scalps.

Although Roosevelt's record for executive ability, sturdy manhood, rare independence, and zeal for practical reform was familiar to every intelligent person, and little doubt existed in the mind of independents that his election would be for the better interests of the people, yet it soon became manifest that his appeals "to follow the flag," "to uphold the national honour abroad," and his promises to punish dishonesty if further investigation disclosed its existence, coupled with an apparent disposition on the part of some Republican leaders to screen canal irregularities, failed to arouse general interest. In fact, campaign apathy was everywhere so prevalent that hope of Republican success seemed steadily diminishing, if it had not already vanished.

Fortunately for Roosevelt, however, an unexpected issue suddenly sprang into life through Richard Croker's denial of a renomination to Justice Daly of the Supreme Court,

¹² Brooklyn speech, Lenox Lyceum, October 31.

because of the latter's refusal to appoint a conspicuously incompetent person as clerk of the Court. In his explanation, Croker laid down as a recognised principle that when he put a man on the bench he "has a right to expect proper consideration at his hands." In other words, "proper consideration" from a judge meant willingness to do whatever Croker demanded. It had long been known that he had a Napoleonic gift of enslaving Tammany officials by recourse to vulgar tyranny, but he had never before openly admitted that a judge must be like clay in the hands of the potter. Such brutal frankness sent a shiver over the entire State. It involved the independence of the judiciary; it menaced public safety; and it prostituted the Courts to the whims of a vicious Boss.

"This gave me my chance,"¹³ said Roosevelt. It restored the instinct of fight, and instantly he declared that Croker was his real opponent, who would control the State through Governor Van Wyck as he had governed Greater New York through Mayor Van Wyck. From that moment Croker became the paramount issue. Van Wyck's model letter of acceptance, filled with fair professions and promises, became camouflage, while the candidate himself wore the brass collar with the name of "Croker," his master, stamped upon it. "Croker," Roosevelt said, "was a powerful, truculent man of a domineering nature, the autocrat of his organisation, a stalwart fighter, who would not take an attack kindly."¹⁴ In the preceding year, when he achieved an unusual victory, he had remained silent. But Roosevelt's direct attacks provoked him to talk, and once started he talked incessantly. He abused Justice Daly; he called Elihu Root "a bad man"; and he stigmatised the Bar Association as a "lot of corporation and Trust lawyers." The *Nation* declared it "the talk of a blackmailing criminal. He threatens his more prominent opponents with exposures of various sorts, just like the strolling extortioners who so often made erring citi-

¹³ *Autobiography*, p. 296.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

zens pay smartly lest their sins find them out. Most of his stories are either evident exaggerations, or silly trivialities, or plain lies.”¹⁵

In the gay insolence of its treatment the influence of this new issue quickly manifested itself in deeper interest and increased registration. Croker soon saw his grievous mistake and sought to amend it. “Never in the history of the organisation,” he said, “has any leader of Tammany Hall asked of or suggested to any judge upon the bench in any part of this State anything connected with his judicial duty.” To Roosevelt this plea indicated loss of nerve, and “to fix the contest in the people’s mind as one between himself and myself,”¹⁶ he multiplied instances of Croker’s autocratic methods. The Colonel was in his element, and for the first time, perhaps, came into full consciousness of his peculiar power. Speaking straight to the people, often with the downward stroke of a clenched fist, with teeth disclosed, and squinting eyes that seemed to vision the cloud of a great misfortune hanging over the State, he told them things already familiar, but in words and tones that vibrated to the very centre of their being. It recalled Macaulay’s description of the best oratory as “reason penetrated and made red-hot by passion.” Many of his speeches, as one now turns the pages of the daily press that carried them to every voter, still stir the emotions, reviving the spell of a splendid and unique talent which could bring an audience into complete harmony with his own mood. Subsequently, the country became familiar with his extraordinary gift of expression, with its peculiar race and flavour, which everywhere reached the masses and got things done. But not until the closing days of the campaign of 1898 did he stand out as a State figure—the one politician who specially represented the people, and whose slightest whisper caught their attention. “I was able,” he could truthfully say, “to fix the contest in the public mind as one between Croker and

¹⁵ November 3, 1898.

¹⁶ *Autobiography*, p. 296.

myself; and against all probabilities, I won by the narrow margin of 18,000 plurality."¹⁷

Though small, this plurality was a Noarchic flood to Croker and Murphy. Determined to win at any cost, their money flowed like water, while their campaign, conducted on stock party lines, encouraged the silverites, promised immunity to the saloons, recognised the methods of McKane, and mixed up personal and party considerations by appealing to ultra machine Republicans. Yet in spite of these influences Roosevelt gained nearly two to one of the increased vote over that cast for Wallace and Parker in the preceding year.¹⁸ It is interesting to note also that Roosevelt's plurality fell below that given Wallace in only two counties—Columbia and Monroe—and that only in Albany, Rensselaer, and Chemung Counties, which gave Wallace a plurality, did Roosevelt fail to secure a plurality. This fact gave rise to the report that Aldridge, Black, and Payn "put the knife" into Roosevelt. Although Albany was Black's official residence and Rensselaer his home, it was well known that influences existed hostile to Roosevelt, which the Governor could not control had he so desired, especially in Rensselaer, the home of Murphy, who sought re-election to the United States Senate; but in Columbia, the home of Payn, the decided drop from 1,309, Wallace's plurality, to 272 for Roosevelt, indicated a guiding hand not less determined to defeat him than that in Monroe, the home of Aldridge, where Wallace's plurality of 4,617 dropped to 2,636 for Roosevelt. Aldridge denied the charge, and soon after resigned as super-

¹⁷ Pluralities of Republicans-elect: Roosevelt, Gov., 17,794; Woodruff, Lt.-Gov., 9,661; McDonough, Sec. of State, 15,839; Morgan, Compt., 10,964; Jaeckel, Treas., 8,665; Davis, Atty.-Gen., 12,476; Bond, Engineer, 9,682. Legislature: Senate, Reps. 27, Dems. 21, doubtful 2; Assembly, Reps. 87, Dems. 60, doubtful 3.

¹⁸ Roosevelt's and Van Wyck's vote aggregated 254,714 more than Wallace's and Parker's in 1897, Van Wyck receiving 86,878 and Roosevelt 167,836. Of this increase Van Wyck got 10,000 in New York County and 5,000 in Kings, his home county, while Roosevelt got 40,000 in the former, and 27,000 in the latter.

intendent of public works. Payn said nothing, but boldly dismissed from the Insurance Department four employés who had actively supported Roosevelt.

In a brief statement Roosevelt recognised the support of Independents and Democrats, who "put the welfare of the State first." He also made plain his purpose. "I am a good Republican, and I believe I can best serve the Republican party by doing everything I can to help it serve the State." In his endeavour to carry out this commendable intention he revealed a capacity in negotiation which amazed many who had so far seen in him nothing more than an unusually clever agitator.

CHAPTER XXX

A FIGHTING GOVERNOR

1899-1900

"SENATOR PLATT," wrote Governor-elect Roosevelt, "is to all intents and purposes a majority of the Legislature."¹ The early selection of a United States senator to succeed Edward Murphy illustrated the truth of Roosevelt's statement, for shortly after the November election Platt, summoning Benjamin B. Odell and Chauncey M. Depew to a confidential conference, offered the senatorship to Odell. With becoming modesty, Odell promptly declined in favour of Depew. Meanwhile the press, ignorant of Platt's choice, considered the availability of party notables. Elihu Root's recent admittance to the organisation circle, because of his genius for untying non-residence knots, naturally brought him to the minds of men anxious to be represented in the Senate by a real statesman. The tinkle of Black's bell could also be heard in the fold. Nor did the merits of Depew, the party's loyal, pleasing orator, escape recognition. Odell, whose fidelity to Roosevelt had given him great prestige, likewise had his friends. Timothy L. Woodruff, whose courtesy and kindness had gained him popularity, also received kindly mention. But no newspaper or individual hazarded a prophecy as to the man to be named. Indeed, it became the speech of politicians that no political event of such importance ever remained so long a profound secret. A few days before the Legislature convened, however, at a banquet given to Odell by Edward H. Harriman, the Wall Street financier, Platt proposed a toast to Chauncey M. Depew, "the next United States senator." That settled it. The

¹ Senate, Reps. 27, Dems. 23; Assembly, Reps. 92, Dems. 58.

"majority" of the Legislature had spoken, and two weeks later the Republican members of both houses approved the selection. The manner of its doing, however, bred an irritation which the Democrats voiced at their next State convention by favouring the election of United States senators by the people. It was a voice crying in the wilderness, but it touched the hearts of progressive men.

Before the manner of Depew's selection had become public, Roosevelt was apprised of the "amusing fashion" in which an absolute boss did things. "The Senator," he says, "invited me one day to talk over what was to be done at Albany. He had with him two or three lieutenants, who counselled with him, but who, when he had finally made up his mind, merely registered and carried out his decrees. He asked if I had any member of the Assembly whom I wished to have put on any committee, explaining that the committees were now being arranged. I answered no, and expressed my surprise at what he had said, because I had not understood that the Speaker, who appointed the committees, had himself been agreed upon by the members-elect. 'Oh!' responded the Senator with a tolerant smile, 'he has not been chosen yet, but of course whoever we choose as Speaker will agree beforehand to make the appointments we wish.' I made a mental note to the effect that if they attempted the same process with the Governor-elect they would find themselves mistaken."²

Platt did not wait long before he sensed an independence that made his gaunt, pale features flush with excitement, for Governor Roosevelt's first message breathed the spirit of good government. He demanded the restoration of "starch" to the civil service law, declaring the Black statute "a farce," since half a mark for merit and the other half for fitness did not constitute a competitive examination. Moreover, to avoid "the utter confusion" existing in having one method of appointment for Greater New York, one for other cities, and one for the State-at-large, he recommended one

² *Autobiography*, pp. 307-8.

uniform system for the entire State. With equal courage he advocated biennial sessions of the Legislature as a means for checking the evil of over-legislation, and announced that the National Guard would be placed under the absolute control of a major-general, whose responsibility should in no wise be disturbed. Following the precedent of Governor Tilden, he reserved canal matters for later special treatment. Of this message Senator Platt remarked: "Any one can issue manifestoes."

The appointment of a Superintendent of Public Works, under existing canal conditions, was by far the most important act of the new administration. The Governor preferred James A. Roberts, who, as State Comptroller, had halted a spoils raid on the Public Works Department and later a canal ring raid on the State treasury. The *Brooklyn Eagle* spoke of him as "the second honest man from Buffalo whose services have been at the disposal of the State."³ But the former Comptroller, desiring to give undivided attention to his private interests, declined the offer. The Governor then turned to John M. Partridge, of Brooklyn, who had been associated with Mayor Seth Low's administration. Platt insisted upon Francis Hendricks of Syracuse. "I liked Hendricks," wrote Roosevelt; "but he came from a city along the line of the canal, so that I did not think he should be appointed anyhow. Moreover, what was far more important, it was necessary to have it understood at the very outset that it was my Administration and no one's but mine. So I told the Senator, politely but firmly, that I could not appoint his man. This produced an explosion."⁴ Nevertheless, the Governor had his way and the Senate confirmed the nomination. He also appointed a non-partisan commission of business men and expert engineers to devise a system which should become the basis for administering the canals. To ascertain whether the former canal officials were guilty of any criminal action, he also appointed two well-known lawyers of the opposite party, who subsequently

³ January 6, 1898.

⁴ *Autobiography*, p. 308.

reported that although grave delinquency had occurred in the prosecution of the work which justified public condemnation, it would be useless to undertake the criminal prosecution of any one, not only because the law, especially after its amendment in May, 1896, bestowed upon the Superintendent of Public Works and the State Engineer such large discretionary powers that they could keep within the law, however extravagant and wasteful they may have been, but because the time allowed to prosecute the heaviest contracts, which created most of the scandal, had expired under the statute of limitations. "My action in these matters," wrote Roosevelt, "established my relations with Mr. Platt on pretty nearly the right basis. . . . My aim was to make a fight . . . only as a necessary incident to securing clean and efficient government."⁵ Platt admitted that the Governor was a Rough-Rider. "He agreed to consult me on all questions," wrote the Senator, "and he religiously fulfilled his pledge, although he frequently did just what he pleased."⁶

In his treatment of the Senator, the Governor displayed much tact. He visited him often, gave the fullest reasons for the legislation sought, kept him fully advised of his intentions, and recognised his feeble condition by exhibiting a desire to relieve him of all physical effort. "There were various measures to which he gave a grudging and querulous assent," continues Roosevelt, "but as regards most legislation I got on fairly well. I secured the enactment of the civil service law and a mass of labour legislation, including laws to increase the number of factory inspectors; to create a tenement-house commission; to improve sweat-shop labour; to make the eight-hour law effective; to enforce the act relating to the hours of railway workers; to equip freight trains with air-brakes; to regulate working hours of women and children and protect them from dangerous machinery; to enforce good scaffolding provisions for workmen on buildings; to provide seats for

⁵ *Autobiography*, p. 310.

⁶ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 374.

waitresses in hotels and restaurants; and to reduce the hours of labour for drug-store clerks. We also got valuable laws for the farmer and the dairyman; and for forest preservation and the protection of our wild life." ⁷

There was hard fighting over some of these measures, but in the end Platt complimented the Governor. "You have just adjourned a Legislature which created a good opinion throughout the State. I congratulate you heartily upon this fact, because I sincerely believe, as everybody else does, that this good impression exists very largely as a result of your personal influence in the legislative chambers. But at the last moment, and to my very great surprise, you did a thing which has caused the business community of New York to wonder how far the notions of Populism, as laid down in Kansas and Nebraska, have taken hold upon the Republican party of the State of New York." ⁸

This barbed attack referred to the Governor's great fight to tax the franchises of street railways, "which," he says, "convulsed people at that time, and marked the beginning of the effort, at least in the Eastern States, to make great corporations really responsible to popular wish and governmental command." A bill for the purpose had been introduced early in the session, but it remained undisturbed until April 27 (1899) when the Governor sent in a special emergency message in its behalf, which, under the rules of the Legislature, made it eligible to be taken up out of its turn. "It affected a large number of corporations, particularly in New York and Buffalo," he wrote, "and after looking into the subject I came to the conclusion that it was a matter of plain decency and honesty that these companies should pay a tax on their franchises, inasmuch as they did nothing that could be considered as service rendered the public in lieu of a tax. But I was hardly prepared for the storm of protest and anger which my proposal aroused. I had to fight the Democratic machine as well as the Republican machine, for former Senator Hill

⁷ *Autobiography*, p. 312.

⁸ *Idem.*, pp. 323-4.

and Senator Platt were equally opposed to my action, while the big corporation men took the same view. . . . The machine leaders in the Legislature were bitterly angry, and the Speaker (S. Fred Nixon) actually tore up my message without reading it to the Assembly."⁹ Thereupon, says Platt, "Roosevelt clinched his fist, gritted his teeth, and drove the franchise tax-law through the Legislature."¹⁰

How he did it, as told by him, illuminates the methods too often practised by big business. "That night they (Republican leaders) were busy, as the session was about to close, trying to arrange some device for the defeat of the bill. At seven the next morning I was informed of what occurred. At eight I was in the Capitol at the Executive chamber, and sent in another special message, which opened as follows: 'I learn that the emergency message which I sent last evening to the Assembly on behalf of the franchise tax bill has not been read. I therefore send hereby another message on the subject. I need not impress upon the Assembly the need of passing this bill at once.' I sent the message with an intimation that if it were not promptly read I should come up in person and read it. Then, as so often happens, the opposition collapsed and the bill went through both Houses with a rush.

"My troubles, however, were not at an end. The bill put the taxation in the hands of the local county boards. This was inadvisable, as the railways sometimes passed through several different counties. It was the end of the session, and the Legislature adjourned. The corporations affected, through various counsel and the party leaders of both organisations, urged me not to sign the bill, laying especial stress on this feature, and asking that I wait until the following year, when a good measure could be put through with this obnoxious feature struck out. I had thirty days under the law in which to sign the bill. If I did not sign it within that time, it would not become a

⁹ *Autobiography*, pp. 321, 322, 326.

¹⁰ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 375.

law. I answered that I agreed with them that this feature was wrong, but that I would rather have the bill as it was than no bill: that I was unwilling to trust what might be done a year later: but that I would reconvene the Legislature in special session, and if the legislators would properly amend the bill, placing the power of taxation in the State, I would be glad, otherwise I would sign the original bill.

"When the representatives of Mr. Platt and of the corporations affected found they could do no better, they assented to this proposition. Efforts were tentatively made to outwit me by inserting amendments that would nullify the effect of the law, or by withdrawing the law when the Legislature convened, which would at once deprive me of the whip hand. On May 12 I wrote Senator Platt, outlining the amendments I desired, and said: 'Of course it must be understood that I will sign the present bill if the proposed bill containing the changes outlined above fails to pass.' On May 18 I notified the Senate leader, John Raines, by telegram: 'Legislature has no power to withdraw the Ford bill. If attempt is made to do so I will sign the bill at once.' On the same day I wired Mr. Odell concerning the bill the leaders were preparing: 'Some provisions very objectionable. I am at work on bill to show you to-morrow. The bill must not contain greater changes than those outlined in my message.' My wishes were heeded, the Legislature amended the bill as I outlined, and it became law.

"There promptly followed something which afforded an index of the good faith of the corporations which had begged for the change. As soon as the law as amended was signed, they refused to pay the taxes, claiming in the lawsuit that followed that the law was unconstitutional, because it contained the very clause which they had so clamorously demanded. Former Senator Hill had appeared before me on behalf of the corporations to argue for the change, and then appeared before the courts to make the argument on the other side. The law was finally declared

constitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States.”¹¹

After such a record it is not surprising that the Republican party, in the following November, carried the Legislature by an increased majority.¹² Senator Platt had his usual grip upon it, and although the Governor now exhibited little inclination to run counter to his views, the appointment of a successor to Louis Payn, whose term as superintendent of insurance expired in February, threatened much embarrassment, since the Senator demanded his reappointment. To this, however, Roosevelt could not consent, as he had learned of Payn's intimate influences with various financiers with whom the Governor deemed it inexpedient that a superintendent of insurance should have connection; but in a conciliatory spirit he offered to appoint an organisation man, mentioning Francis Hendricks of Syracuse, an honest and efficient official, and a warm friend of the Senator, who had originally proposed him for superintendent of public works. But the Senator, being committed to Payn, refused to yield, while Roosevelt held as firmly to Hendricks. Thus matters stood until the day before the appointment was to be made, when Odell, who had persuaded Platt to acquiesce in Hendricks' appointment, so advised the Governor.

Notwithstanding the peaceful settlement, the press regarded it an organisation victory. Indeed, the careful observer, watching with amused interest, had discovered differential acts on the part of the Governor, indicating a growing desire to appease the organisation and to secure a re-nomination. His message to the Legislature (January, 1900) was largely devoted to taxation without the expression of decisive opinions. He also ignored the question of biennial sessions of the Legislature and remained silent respecting an employers' liability law, for both of which he had struggled in vain during the preceding session.

¹¹ *Autobiography*, pp. 326-7.

¹² Senate, Reps. 27, Dems. 23; Assembly, Reps. 93, Dems. 57.

Moreover, his consent to make "spoils" of the transfer-tax appraiserships seemed to the civil service reformer a weakening of his principles. Nor did his acceptance of the Comptroller's statement escape attention, since it excepted from the competitive system the new inheritance-tax appraisers on the plea that such positions required an unquestioned honesty "which cannot be brought out by a mental examination." In fact, criticism of his apparent willingness to turn over places of responsible and delicate duties to be filled by politicians aroused intense indignation when the greater cost became known of collecting the inheritance-tax compared with that of other taxes.¹³ So irritating did such disparagement of his critics become that the Governor occasionally struck back at the "solemn reformers of the tomfool variety, who, according to their custom, paid attention to the name and not the thing."¹⁴ Nevertheless, he admitted "trying to stay in with the organisation in order to get things done,"¹⁵ and after the appointment and confirmation of Hendricks (February 12), Platt's expressions indicated that the Governor's renomination would not be objectionable.

But the death of Garret A. Hobart, which occurred in the preceding November (1899), started a demand, especially in the West, that the Vice-Presidency be given to the progressive Governor of New York. As the weeks passed this sentiment deepened and spread, and by the time the Legislature adjourned (April 12) the organisation had determined to switch him onto the Vice President track, notwithstanding Lieutenant-Governor Woodruff, a disciple

¹³ Cost of collecting the U. S. internal revenue 1.59 per cent; customs, 3.57 per cent; excise in N. Y. State, 2.66 per cent; corporation tax, 1 per cent; inheritance-tax, 12 per cent. In New York County the amount collected in 1899 was \$1,269,000. Of this \$7,000 went to the District Attorney's office; \$10,000 to the Surrogate's office; \$16,000 to the Comptroller; \$31,000 to the appraisers; and \$65,000 to attorneys; total, \$129,000, more than 10 per cent. New York *Herald*, June 4, 1900.

¹⁴ *Autobiography*, p. 311.

¹⁵ *Idem.*, p. 340.

of Platt, had announced his candidacy for that office. To Roosevelt, however, the Vice Presidency did not appeal. Although some importance had originally attached to it by the selection of younger and more vigorous men than those selected for President, it offered slight opportunity for promotion, since only three Vice Presidents, Adams, Jefferson, and Martin Van Buren, had succeeded to the Presidency except upon the death of the President, which had occurred only four times in a century. John Adams pronounced it "the most insignificant office that ever the mind of man contrived or his imagination conceived." In later years it came to be looked upon as an ornamental sinecure for retiring politicians, selected for geographical and political purposes.¹⁶ To relieve the ennui, Vice President Hobart, an opulent man of engaging manners, frequently gave brilliant social entertainments, a feature that Vice President Fairbanks subsequently revived.

Roosevelt very quickly and decidedly let it be known that he did not want the office. His sympathies with Democratic ideals determined the course of his activities, and if re-elected Governor he could broaden his work of civic reform. Besides, he knew President McKinley was not kindly disposed, and that Senator Hanna, reflecting the view of the President, openly antagonised him because he encouraged war with Spain, and had not immediately suppressed the activity of friends who pressed him as a candidate for President against McKinley. Indeed, Hanna offered to throw his votes to Odell if New York wanted the

¹⁶ Adams was three years younger than Washington, Jefferson eight years younger than Adams, and Burr thirteen years younger than Jefferson. In the last half of the century, the age was usually reversed. King was eighteen years older than Pierce, Johnson a year older than Lincoln, Wilson ten years older than Grant, Wheeler three years older than Hayes, Hendricks eighteen years older than Cleveland, and Morton nine years older than Harrison. There were three exceptions to the rule. Breckinridge was thirty years younger than Buchanan, Colfax one year younger than Grant, and Hobart one year younger than McKinley, who was fifteen years older than Roosevelt.

Vice-Presidency. But the latter declined. Meantime the Governor reiterated his dislike of the Vice-Presidency and his desire to be renominated. To a friend he wrote on April 16: "Nobody can tell whether the machine intends to renominate me next fall or not. . . . The dangerous element comes from the corporations which have been greatly exasperated by the franchise tax. They would like to get me out of politics, but at this moment they think the best thing to do is to put me into the Vice-Presidency."¹⁷

At the State convention, which met at New York on April 17 for the selection of delegates-at-large to the National Convention, Roosevelt's name, whenever mentioned, was vociferously applauded. The demonstration peaked, however, when it was coupled with that of McKinley. Nevertheless, the trend of sentiment seemed to favour Roosevelt for Governor. It was a suspicious circumstance that the platform endorsed the McKinley administration, but left the delegates uninstructed.¹⁸

On the assembling of the National Republican Convention, held at Philadelphia on June 21, the one outstanding issue was the selection of a candidate for Vice President. The Administration plainly preferred John D. Long of Massachusetts, while Hanna personally leaned toward Cornelius S. Bliss of New York. Although a strong sentiment existed for Roosevelt—more, he says, than he appreciated at the time,¹⁹—the outspoken opposition of Senator Hanna had a chilling effect. "Platt and Hanna took opposite positions," says Roosevelt, "but each at the time cordially sympathised with the other's feelings about me."²⁰

In the presence of such conditions, the Governor, at a formal meeting of the New York delegation, repeated his

¹⁷ *Autobiography*, pp. 339-40-41.

¹⁸ The delegates-at-large were Senators Platt and Depew, Governor Roosevelt and Benjamin B. Odell.

¹⁹ *Autobiography*, p. 332.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

determination not to accept a nomination for Vice President, insisting that he desired and had earned a renomination for governor. Thereupon Platt notified him that he could not be nominated for governor. Stung by the arrogant fiat, Roosevelt declared that he accepted the challenge, and would make a straight-out fight on the proposition. Then, indulging in a bit of fiatism himself, he gave notice that he would win out. It was an angry hour, filled with passionate words and impulsive threats, but finally ended in the endorsement of Woodruff for Vice President. To the sincere friends of Roosevelt the situation looked like a play of the bosses to get rid of him entirely, and what promised to be a peaceful convention threatened to end in a divisive snarl. It added to the irritation that Roosevelt, though a delegate-at-large, suddenly disappeared.

When word of these disturbing complications reached the White House, the President wired: "If the convention wants to nominate Roosevelt, I do not intend to stand in his way." This resulted in the friends of the several candidates for Vice President leaving the selection to Senator Hanna. It was not a desirable job. Former Governor John D. Long of Massachusetts, then secretary of the navy, had served with great acceptance. Major-General Francis V. Greene of New York, who commanded the American troops at the battle of Manila, had finished the work so auspiciously begun by Admiral Dewey; and Jonathan P. Dolliver had won his place as an orator during a period when real oratory seemed on the decline. But Hanna soon discovered that although the New York admirers of Roosevelt desired him continued as Governor, he of all the candidates had most impressed the imagination of Americans. The fame of his progressive legislation, especially his franchise-tax law, had reached the masses everywhere, and had the awful tragedy of the next year been foreseen his admirers throughout the country could scarcely have been more insistent. In the meantime Roosevelt, after interviews with several New Yorkers, reappeared with a changed attitude, declaring, "I cannot dis-

appoint my Western friends if they insist," "I cannot seem to be bigger than my party." This ended opposition, McKinley and Roosevelt becoming the nominees by acclamation amidst a demonstration that had rarely been witnessed in a National convention.²¹

With Roosevelt side-tracked, the cry of "Odell for Governor" swept the State. After his exhibition of tactical skill in securing the nomination and election of the Hero of San Juan in 1898, Odell had been helpful in aiding good legislation. "During the two years I have been Governor," said Roosevelt, "he has been very close to me, steadily winning my respect and liking."²² Anti-machine journals spoke kindly of him,²³ and no opposition of consequence found voice except from Odell himself. In June he had been in a receptive mood, but when the way opened he seemed not to want the job. His reasons were entirely personal. Moreover, observation taught him that Governors who refused to oblige the Boss, endured much and in the end became the goat. He had opinions of his own which as Governor he could not yield, and although his apparent friendship with Platt then seemed unbroken, he had misgivings for the future. He frankly said as much to the Senator, who replied by promising that with him the old kind of politics would not be practised. Still Odell held back. He preferred to be a Warwick rather than a King. "I happen to know," wrote Roosevelt, "that Mr. Odell sincerely is not desirous of being nominated for Governor; but the feeling throughout the State is absolutely irresistible."

²¹ Besides the usual routine planks respecting labour, trusts, and the rights of citizens, the platform declared steadfast opposition to the free and unlimited coinage of silver; reaffirmed the policy of protection, reciprocity, and civil service; declared it had redeemed all its promises respecting good roads, reduction of war taxes, the acquisition of Samoa, the annexation of Hawaii, the independence of Cuba, and the destruction of Spain's authority.

²² Republican journals of August 25.

²³ "If a machine man must be chosen Odell is the best of the lot." *Buffalo Express*, August 24.

Meantime Lieutenant-Governor Woodruff's Brooklyn friends presented his name, and support quickly sprung up in other sections of the State. A very remarkable demonstration at the State Fair in Syracuse bore witness to his popularity. Rarely had a candidate received a more picturesque endorsement. It seemed as if the desired promotion was at last to come to the agreeable young man. Yet a belief existed that Woodruff, although generally adequate, lacked the firmness, if not the political foresight, for so important an office. He would not consciously neglect a public duty on account of a private partiality, but could one, so sensitive to giving pain, exercise an iron rule rather than a nerveless policy? In fact, the likelihood of his selection rearoused a demand for Odell, who never indulged in the "glad hand" and lacked not a few of the graces. Occasionally he showed an indifference almost insulting, although he would take immense pains to defend a friend. In the realm of action his intellect was always under control and his language guarded. However, many within the organisation, fearful of his known inclination to assume control of affairs, continued their support of Woodruff, who suddenly disclosed a disposition to stand for what friends called "his just rights." But when Odell, yielding to the wishes of others, became an aggressive candidate, Woodruff, contrary to the judgment of several leaders, gracefully abandoned his claim, and for the third time accepted the nomination for lieutenant-governor.

This settlement turned the State convention, which assembled at Saratoga on September 5, into a Republican rally. Woodruff presided, John Raines reported the platform, former-Governor Black presented Odell, Senator Depew eulogised Woodruff, and the clerk cast the vote for each of the five State officers elected in 1898.²⁴ It was not a noisy

²⁴ The ticket was as follows: Governor, Benjamin B. Odell, Newburgh; Lt.-Gov., Timothy L. Woodruff, Brooklyn; Comptroller, William J. Morgan, Buffalo; Sec. of State, John T. McDonough, Albany; Treasurer, John P. Jaekel, Auburn; Engineer, Edward A. Bond, Water-

meeting. Platt came in unnoticed, and other notables failed to get the usual generous applause. But when Odell appeared after his nomination, the entire audience rose and received him cordially. His speech became notable since he struck Croker's Ramapo water-works scheme a severe blow, pledging cordial and active support to any remedial legislation which might be necessary to enable New York City to own and control its water supply, and declaring the rights of the city paramount to all other individual or corporate rights not municipal. Later, in a letter published during the campaign, he struck it again, by elucidating his position as meaning that "if any action heretofore taken by the Legislature shall be a bar to the granting of such rights, that, of course, must first be swept away," and expressly stating that "this would apply to the repeal of the Ramapo or any other grant that might be a hindrance to the consummation of this much-desired result."

Much as the convention showed its appreciation of Odell, however, it was not until Roosevelt arrived that a real, old-fashioned enthusiastic demonstration occurred. He was brown as a nut, having spoken since his nomination for Vice President in ten States, and he brought with him the enthusiasm that pervaded the West. As he entered the auditorium six times three cheers were given. His speech, full of praise for Odell and of faith in his own liberal views that made him popular, foreshadowed the great career that was before him.

town; Atty.-Gen., John C. Davies, Camden. The resolutions reaffirmed the national platform, endorsed the nomination of McKinley, congratulated the country on the nomination of Roosevelt, contrasted Republican tax-rates and the amounts collected with those under former Democratic administrations, declared in favour of taxing corporations enjoying the use of public property, and questioned the advisability of further canal improvement aside from its maintenance until estimates of the cost are scientifically made.

CHAPTER XXXI

HILL AND CROKER QUARREL

1899-1900

THE defeat of Van Wyck for governor in 1898 had deeply humiliated Croker and Murphy. Their money was wasted, the coveted spoils of office lost, and their prestige badly damaged, since a strong party sentiment existed that the nomination of an up-state candidate, for the reasons insisted upon by Hill, would have robbed Roosevelt of his winning issue. So Croker sailed for Europe and Murphy dropped out of the United States Senate, leaving David B. Hill to brace up the party.

Hill would have been unhuman had he not chuckled over the generally accepted reason for Van Wyck's defeat. It added to his prestige as a politician of prescience. Friends whispered their congratulations, predicted a new lease of leadership, and awaited his orders. But Hill was not deceived as to the condition in which defeat had left the party. The demoralising lurch toward Populism had weakened the loyalty of many men of character, while new local leaders, zealous in their support of Bryanism, had been encouraged by Croker's recent declaration (August, 1899) for free-silver. The former Governor took courage, however, in the growing opposition to expansion or "Imperialism," which tended to attract Independents and reunite the Democracy. Heartened by these symptoms, he began preparing for the State convention, called to meet at New York on June 5 (1900) to select delegates to the National Convention, which would assemble at Kansas City on July 5. He frankly admitted that Bryan would be the nominee for President, but he hoped to suppress free-silver and make Imperialism the paramount issue. Accordingly, he boldly announced that

the State convention must not reaffirm free-silver or instruct the delegates. This declaration quickly aroused the Simon-pure Bryanites, who threatened, in the event of such restrictions, to hold a convention of their own on June 6 and send a protesting delegation to Kansas City. Croker, in a cablegram from England, backed the Dissenters, and John F. Carroll, who had supplanted John C. Sheehan as acting leader of Tammany, promised them one hundred and five delegates. In this contest Norman E. Mack, editor and proprietor of the prosperous *Buffalo Times*, won recognition as a leader henceforth to be reckoned with in Democratic councils. He was strictly a party man, loyal, courteous, and generally adequate, working, if not always wisely, with acknowledged cheerfulness, co-operating with men he never liked, and often acquiescing in measures little to his taste. His support locally had long been recognised as necessary, and the party regularly honoured him as a delegate to State and national conventions. Upon the resignation of William F. Sheehan in 1896, he became a member of the State Committee, and although the time came when he preferred another than William Jennings Bryan, he left nothing undone in 1900 to forward his interests.

These up-state changes in leadership made Hill wary. He knew Bryan had the sentiment as well as the votes, but to retain authority over the State Committee, which chiefly concerned him because of Croker's efforts to gain its control, he resorted to his characteristic tactics. For years the State Committee had been the support of his leadership, and to lose its control now, on the eve of a presidential election, would rob him of the power to reorganise the party after Bryanism had withered. To placate his opponents, therefore, he withdrew his objection to instructing the delegates, and softened his platform attitude by proposing an approval of the Kansas City platform at the State convention in September. This, he said, would coincide with New Jersey's recent action and be the logical procedure. But he cunningly objected to Mayor Robert Van Wyck as a delegate-

at-large, because of his interest in the American or so-called Tammany Ice Company, then the most harmful Trust in the State. Thereupon Carroll snapped out an ugly protest to the proscription of Van Wyck, and renewed his threat to reorganise the State Committee. Thus at one o'clock on the morning of convention day it looked as if Hill would lose. Then, suddenly turning upon the sullen Carroll and other lieutenants of the absent Croker, he declared that unless they let the personnel of the State Committee alone, he would take the floor and exploit the Tammany stockholders of the Ice Trust, which had doubled the price of a necessary of life. It had long been known, he said, that Tammany was in politics for what it could make out of it, but the public did not yet appreciate that its Mayor, possessed of a large block of ice-trust stock, was shamelessly robbing the poor for his own benefit! The part, like most of Hill's plays when cornered, was perhaps a little overdone: but he made it quite clear that one Democratic politician at least would deplore a cross-examination as to his investments. And now, as heretofore, those who disliked him most yielded first. This meant that Frank Campbell and Elliott Danforth, his steadfast friends, would remain at the head of the State and Executive Committees, thus giving him absolute control of the State machine.

After this the convention ran smoothly. Hill waived his objection to Augustus Van Wyck,¹ whom McLaughlin substituted for the Mayor, while the Committee on Resolutions, picked by Hill and appointed by his temporary chairman, stood 7 to 35 against endorsing the Chicago platform. The resolutions declared for the nomination of Bryan, favoured the endorsement of the Kansas City platform, demanded the parity of gold and silver as currency, condemned imperialism, insisted upon the evacuation of Cuba and the abolition of Porto Rican duties, and denounced trusts and private monopoly in every form. Thus the convention, which prom-

¹ The delegates-at-large were: David B. Hill, Richard Croker, Edward Murphy Jr., and Augustus Van Wyck.

ised excited discussion and angry scenes, proved as gentle as Mary's lamb. Indeed, Hill's success in defeating the endorsement of the Chicago platform led him, either on his own motion or at the request of Bryan, to visit Lincoln, Nebraska, on his way to Kansas City, with the hope of becoming leader of the convention. Although his mission proved fruitless, he found upon his arrival at the convention city a strong sentiment opposed to the reaffirmation of free-coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1. Many delegates from Southern, Eastern and Middle Western States preferred the declaration of the New York convention, whose aggressive efforts stimulated the Silverites to deprive Hill of membership on the platform committee.

Croker quickly approved it. The summary way in which Hill had silenced Tammany's determination to endorse the Chicago platform had deeply stirred Croker's anger, and it pleased him to have a ready-made opportunity to strike back. He began it by offering Hill the Vice Presidency, which the latter indignantly declined. Later, at a formal meeting of the New York delegation, a motion to make Van Wyck the platform committeeman was immediately followed by an amendment substituting David B. Hill. Thus the Rubicon was crossed, sixty-eight of the seventy-two delegates being present, with Croker and Hill face to face. As if dreading an encounter, a breathless silence followed. Finally, Patrick H. McCarren of Brooklyn, in a good-natured, conversational tone, cited Van Wyck's creditable run for Governor as sufficient reason for honouring him. Mayor McGuire of Syracuse thought it an insufficient reason for turning down the one man in the delegation whose wide personal acquaintance, acknowledged leadership, and long experience in platform making especially fitted him for the serious work in hand. To do so would be an insult. This aroused Thomas F. Grady, who asked, insolently: "Is he the only man in New York who can draw a platform? We know now what it will be and New York has already voted to stand for it, whatever it is. Eloquence, acquaintance, and

leadership," he continued, "are not needed. The Bryan element want a man it can trust. Hill can have no complaint. He was at the head of the party as long as he chose to remain there. The suggestion that the naming of another would be an insult is ridiculous."

Thus far Hill had remained a silent and apparently an undisturbed listener; but when Grady ceased he rose slowly, and, squarely facing Croker, said: "Criticism has been made of my attitude in 1896, but no man has a right to question my Democracy." Croker, remaining seated, interrupted with the statement: "I don't think anybody intended to criticise your Democracy, but it is believed that because of your opposition to the silver plank a new man would be more acceptable." Then, raising his voice, he added, abruptly, "And there is no reason why you should think the position is reserved for you every year." "No, I have no such idea," responded Hill calmly. "But I want you to remember," shaking his finger at Croker, "that what I said and did in the Committee in 1896 was done for the good of the Democrats in New York State, and when I returned home I stood for the ticket as well as you did." "Oh, no, you didn't," shot back Croker. "You were not heard of much during that campaign." "Equally as much as you were," Hill retorted. "At critical times in the party's history in the State, you are living in Europe." "You are sore," replied Croker. "I accuse you," exclaimed Hill, still standing, with shaking finger, "of trying to make me a Vice-Presidential candidate against my will, and I now tell you that I will not have it. You cannot humiliate me on one proposition and feed me a sop on another."²

It recalled Platt's effort to make Roosevelt a candidate for Vice President, and derisive smiles were visible as the cry of "Vote! Vote! Vote!" centred attention on the wisdom of ending a disagreeable controversy. A roll-call resulted—Van Wyck 40, Hill 26, absent 4, not voting (the competitors) 2. Of Van Wyck's vote twenty-seven came

² *The Daily Press* of July, 1900.

from below the Harlem, four from Erie County, and nine from Rensselaer, Albany, and Monroe. If not wholly unexpected, it was a stinging defeat, and on the announcement of the result Hill immediately left the room. The caucus then selected the remaining committeemen, among them Norman E. Mack for the National Committee, a position which he continued to hold for more than twenty years. Speaking of the matter subsequently, Hill said: "All blunders are costly. This was a blunder. It injected New York ward politics into a national affair. What I regret is the damage to the party in our State."

The tremendous significance of Hill's defeat did not at once appear. It subsequently developed, however, that his presence on the platform committee would have eliminated from its report the endorsement of the free-silver plank, although Bryan had positively refused to accept the nomination without it, while his control of the New York delegation under the unit rule would have prevented the convention from defeating the Committee's report, had an effort to do so been made.³

Although denied a place on the platform committee, Hill was the favourite of the audience. Indeed, the picturesque feature of the convention was the wild enthusiasm displayed for him. Whenever opportunity offered, throat-bursting calls, often drowning the voice of a speaker, arose from the great crowd, which refused to be satisfied with another.

³ The platform condemned the Administration's Philippine policy; demanded the evacuation of Cuba and the abolition of duties on Porto Rico imports; favoured expansion by peaceful and legitimate means, but regarded imperialism as involving the very existence of the Republic and the destruction of our free institutions; reaffirmed the Monroe Doctrine; condemned militarism; denounced monopolies; and reaffirmed the demand for an American financial system made by the American people for themselves, which shall restore and maintain a bimetallic price level, and as a part of such system the immediate restoration of the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present rate of 16 to 1, without waiting for the consent of any other nation.

Finally, when the call of States began for speeches seconding the nomination of Bryan, Connecticut yielded to Hill, and as he stepped to the platform the whole audience, except a small group of Tammany men, sprang to its feet and cheered wildly and long. His reception was surpassed only by that of the speaker placing Bryan in nomination. Nothing could have been more flattering to Hill, or more galling to Croker, who had for two days passed in and out of the auditorium unnoticed. It seemed to some that Hill's unusual reception sourced in the crowd's dislike of the Tammany boss. But whatever the cause, his speech repaid their importunity. He was in fine voice, and each sentence, distinctly heard, was punctuated with applause. His tribute to Bryan especially touched a chord of sympathy in the hearts of admirers, while his closing plea for party unity again brought the audience to its feet. As he passed to his seat through the cheering throng, Murphy, Shea, McCarren and others who had voted against him, grasped his hand, shaking it heartily. Only Croker and Grady sat sullenly and unmoved.

After the nomination of Bryan by acclamation, interest centred in the selection of a candidate for Vice President. As speakers presented one name after another, the customary applause indicated no favourite until Thomas F. Grady, the Tammany orator, in insolent defiance of instructions, proposed David B. Hill. It provoked the most dramatic incident of the day. A tremendous shout swept through the hall, increasing into the most tempestuous demonstration, delegates holding aloft State standards, while the whole audience was canopied with fluttering handkerchiefs and waving flags. Meanwhile Hill, savagely resisting the pertinacious insistence of Croker and Murphy, made his way, closely followed by Augustus Van Wyck, to the platform. Here he begged his friends not to allow the matter to go further. "I cannot, I will not take it," he said to Van Wyck. "Please do not force it. This is absolutely unfair." Turning upon the chairman, he said sharply: "Stop this

thing! It is not wise. It should not be forced upon me!" When Grady closed his harangue, the audience again went wild, while Hill stood with bowed head, his face like marble and his hands trembling. Finally the commotion quieted. But as he spoke, courteously and with deference, giving personal and other reasons why he could not accept, the crowd interrupted each sentence with "No! No!" "You can!" "That's no reason!" When he finished, however, the dead silence that followed resembled Artemus Ward's attitude to the fire brigade, whom he thanked for "kindly discontinuing its squirting."

Unlike Roosevelt, Hill did not base his declination upon a dislike of the office. His service in the Senate had been agreeable and in many respects highly commendable. He was familiar with its rules, had enjoyed the society of senators, many of whom still retained their seats, and although the Vice Presidency would exclude him from debate, it offered opportunity for widening his acquaintance and strengthening his leadership. Indeed, many reasons existed to make the position especially attractive to one who had become a national figure. But the endorsement of the Chicago platform humiliated him, if it did not deprive him of the hope of success. Moreover, a feeling possessed him as it did Roosevelt at Philadelphia, that if he yielded he might not be nominated after all. Croker's hate and the Bryanites' dislike made him distrust the Greeks bearing gifts. The convention then selected Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois.⁴

On his return home Hill promptly announced his intention of supporting Bird S. Coler for Governor. Coler, a young Wall Street broker, was then comptroller of New

⁴ The ballot stood: Stevenson, 559½; Hill, 200; Charles A. Towne of Minnesota, 89½; scattering, 87. Hill's votes came from the following States: Alabama, 19; Delaware, 2; Florida, 4; Idaho, 3; Louisiana, 16; Massachusetts, 13; Missouri, 6; Montana, 3; Nevada, 4; New Jersey, 20; New York, 72; North Dakota, 6; Oregon, 2; Tennessee, 24; Hawaii, 6.

York, an office which Croker, in framing his ticket in 1897, had conceded to important banking interests upon their demand that the city's finances be put in safe hands. Measured by his professions and creditable record, he appeared sincere and honest, giving intelligent attention to taxation, and to the advocacy of reforms in behalf of economy. This extended his influence far beyond the Democratic party. But Hill's partiality seemed to arouse in him an inordinate ambition, if it did not turn his head, for no sooner was his candidacy for Governor announced than he imagined his relations with Tammany would prove a handicap at the polls. To strengthen himself, therefore, he sought to rid himself of Crokerism by publishing an article on "commercialism in politics," in which he opposed an enlargement of the Ramapo water-works plant, a private corporation that meant larger profits to the company and higher taxes for the people. As expected, this greatly offended Croker.

Hill's selection of Coler naturally added to Croker's estrangement, and to weaken the former Governor in up-state counties he announced that the candidate for Governor must come from territory above the Harlem. Thereupon several candidates went into training, among them William F. Mackey of Buffalo, a prosperous lawyer, a good citizen, and an ardent politician, who had supported Cleveland in 1892, thought him the best candidate in 1896, and had recently gained much prestige by entering the State Senate in 1899 from a district usually carried by a Republican. Back of Mackey's candidacy were the silver Democrats of his vicinage, led by Norman E. Mack. Afterwards Edward Murphy declared for John B. Stanchfield of Elmira, formerly a law partner of Hill, under whose tutelage he had become district attorney of Chemung County, mayor of Elmira, and for several terms a member of the Assembly. Whatever impediments growing out of his legislative record might stand in the way of his success at the polls, no one doubted Stanchfield's fitness for the high office. His reputation as an able lawyer and forceful, scholarly speaker

covered the State. There was a generally accepted story that Stanchfield's friendship for Hill, after the latter failed in 1896 to secure his nomination for governor, had noticeably cooled, and that his disappointment in 1898 had still lowered the temperature. Murphy's suggestion, therefore, seemed to have a little of the feline character, as if the former Senator took a catlike pleasure in torturing Hill. This was the more manifest since he had preferred Van Wyck to Stanchfield in 1898. But whatever of malice there may have been in the suggestion, onlookers believed it merely a bait to divide Hill's supporters. Hill so understood it, and to meet the tactful move he began as usual to play for position, which hinged on naming the temporary chairman of the State convention, called to assemble at Saratoga on September 11. He was not ignorant of his weakness. Out of office, without patronage, and in opposition to the powerful ice-trust and Tammany grafters, he could rely for control only on the fidelity of old friends and his prestige as a leader. With his customary foresight, therefore, he polled the State committee, and pledging a majority to sustain him, had it called together on August 16. Immediately upon its assembling he moved that his faithful friend, Mayor McGuire of Syracuse, be designated as temporary chairman of the convention. Grady promptly moved to lay the motion on the table, saying that such early action was wholly unnecessary and without precedent. Hill replied that whoever held the position would need two or three weeks to prepare a suitable speech. To this plausible reason Grady demurred, saying that any designation at that time would provoke a heated party contest more bitter than that developed by the snap convention of 1892. Like an auger the word "snap" bored its way to deeper feelings, transforming the group of politicians into the likeness of that former State Committee, whose strange, fantastic action had brought such humiliation and defeat. No one could make an adequate reply. The effort to name a temporary chairman four weeks in advance instead of the customary four days, in order to

control the appointment of the convention's committees, was too plainly a "snap" performance, and although a majority had previously pledged their support three members bolted, the roll-call tabling Hill's motion, 26-23.

Hill's defeat aroused a bitter State-wide contest for the selection of delegates, in which Hill's lieutenants, jealous of their power, rallied to his support. Even William F. Sheehan suddenly appeared in Erie County to oppose Norman E. Mack's growing influence. Old friends in Monroe, Onondaga, Albany, and other counties, also proved their loyalty. The belief obtained, too, that at the next meeting of the State Committee the three deserters would support McGuire. Meantime Stanchfield, inactive and close-mouthed, seemed in no wise to encourage his candidacy.

On the assembling of the State convention the Coler men expressed confidence, but to Hill the union of Stanchfield and Mackey seemed so certain that he avoided a second humiliation by absenting himself from the meeting of the State Committee, allowing Croker to select Patrick H. McCarren for temporary chairman without opposition.

To outsiders Hill's action seemed like a surrender. But his lieutenants understood his far-sighted play for position, since Croker's nomination of Stanchfield would load him with the responsibility of the party's defeat in November as the forced nomination of Van Wyck did in 1898. This would continue the spoils famine and bring repentance. That Hill had not dropped the fight for Coler, however, became evident the next morning, for no sooner had the convention organised under McCarren than Duncan C. Lee, a young professor of oratory and English at Cornell University, with a clear, ringing voice, presented a resolution which he asked to be read and referred.⁵ The clerk, beginning to read, suddenly

⁵ "Resolved, that we especially condemn and denounce the illegal corporation, known as the Ice Trust, which particularly oppresses the poor and arbitrarily raises the price of one of the necessities of life, and we demand that the Republican Attorney-General of the State proceed with diligence for the legal destruction of said Trust."

stopped, and revealing in an audible whisper that it condemned the ice-trust, refused to read further. Thereupon McCarren shouted that it would be referred without reading. Instantly the convention was in an uproar. Lee, supported by the Coler delegates, moved an appeal from the Chair's decision, while Tammany, led by Grady, violently opposed it. For fifteen minutes the wildest disorder obtained, in the midst of which McCarren declared the convention adjourned. The Coler delegates, however, had accomplished their purpose. It made the ice-trust an issue, and although Croker subsequently fought it savagely, the Committee on Resolutions dared not suppress it. Upon its adoption the convention indulged for the first time in an outburst of genuine applause, mingled with insulting exclamations addressed to Croker.

Tammany received a more disturbing jolt when Hill, making his first appearance in the convention, received an ovation similar to his greeting at Chicago. Croker had passed in and out with slight attention; Murphy's feeble welcome reflected a feeling that he had again unwisely delivered his party into the hands of Tammany; and George Raines, as permanent chairman, had read to the end a carefully prepared address without stirring a murmur of enthusiasm. Indeed, no spontaneous display of real feeling shook the convention until Hill, unattended, walked down the aisle with a firm tread, his penetrating eye flashing a determination to uncork his pent-up indignation. Even those who distrusted him most seemed to yield to the spell of his leadership, while Croker, who had no quality that appealed to his party, marvelled at his rival's continued popularity.

Another shock came when Albany County responded to the call for the presentation of candidates. As Hill arose, so did the audience, and while he walked to the platform it gave him three times three rousing cheers. On his reaching the stage a second ovation came. As he stood firm and erect, waiting for silence, a forensic duty seemed never more

happily wedded to private inclination. Almost every sentence pilloried Croker. "Bird S. Coler needs no introduction," he said. "As Comptroller of the City of New York, elected three years ago, he has conducted the affairs of the office with such marked and signal ability that he has attracted the attention of the people of the State and of the United States. You will recollect the confession of judgment bill passed for the protection of the taxpayers of the City of New York. He was its author. You recollect the Ramapo fight which he fought from the beginning to the end. You recollect his efforts to protect New York City from control of the ice trust which you have properly denounced in your platform. You recollect his efforts to rip up corruption everywhere. He is said to have offended some people. Where is the man who has stood for the right that has not made enemies? It is also said that his neighbours do not present his name to-day because they could not get the consent of somebody. I know not who; nor do I care. I have simply this to say (looking down into the face of Croker)—if Mr. Coler is unfortunate in his friends, he is certainly fortunate in his enemies!" The convention had punctuated each sentence with applause. But this final thrust, having a touch of the true Promethean fire, brought a prolonged outburst that vibrated through the hall.

Fulsome presentations of Stanchfield and Mackey followed, but the seconding speeches banished all semblance of order. Otto Kempner of Kings County turned a rapid firing gun upon Croker, to which Grady replied with bitter scorn and invective. This gust and passion brought Charles N. Bulger of Oswego to his feet. Compared to Grady, Bulger was a lightweight physically, but with an unusually strong, penetrating voice and a quiver full of vituperative phrases, he filled the remotest corner of the auditorium with charges of ice-trust profiteering and Ramapo grafting, which the yells of Tammany could not drown. The gavel of George Raines made no impression. St. George and the dragon

had clinched, and for nearly an hour the convention became an old-fashioned Democratic rumpus, so dear to the lovers of excitement. Finally the storm blew itself out, and the roll-call began. As Hill surmised, Mackey's followers supported Stanchfield, the ballot resulting: Stanchfield, 294; Coler, 154; Mackey, 1. Then came the familiar play of preserving party unity, for however much verbal intemperance may arouse deep and sometimes lasting distrust among the masses, it is often treated by politicians with strange tolerance. So now, Hill, calm and smiling, immediately arose, and with measured words, said serenely: "There is no question about the Democracy, the loyalty, and the capacity of John B. Stanchfield of Chemung. It gives me great pleasure, therefore, on behalf of a life-long acquaintance, to move his unanimous nomination by this convention." This motion, blended with its graceful compliment, exercised a moderating influence, which opened the way for all other nominations by acclamation.⁶

The leading feature of the canvass that followed was the activity of Bryan and Roosevelt, each of whom received credit of making over six hundred speeches in twenty-four States. Although Bryan had insisted on the reaffirmation of the free-coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, he not only practically ignored it in his speech of acceptance at Indianapolis and his ratification address at Lincoln, but he declared anti-imperialism the paramount issue, denouncing those who preferred "an empire to a republic." Yet he soon found popular interest in the principle less active than upon the question of Trusts and the evils to which organised labour was subject. As a fertile, audacious, tireless speaker, however, Bryan made an extraordinary canvass. His ap-

⁶ The nominees were: Governor, John B. Stanchfield, Chemung; Lt.-Governor, William F. Mackey, Erie; Sec. of State, John F. Norton, Rensselaer; Comp., Edwin S. Atwater, Dutchess; Treas., John B. Judson, Fulton; Atty.-Gen., Thomas F. Conway, Clinton; Engr. and Sur., Russell R. Stuart, Onondaga.

peals to the social passions seemed to develop a sentiment of almost idolatrous devotion, his wild, whirling words often giving the impression of flightiness, or at least a lack of poise. Moreover, he made himself common by jesting with too much ease. As election day approached it was evident he had not won the whole-hearted confidence of many to whom he made his most direct appeals, while it became plain that the free-silver issue remained the decisive influence which controlled the great mass of independent voters.

The experience of Stanchfield and other Democratic New York speakers differed slightly from that of Bryan. They could talk of the evils of imperialism, and denounce with fresh illustrations the arbitrary government of the Philip-pines, but the Tammany ice-trust and the Ramapo water-works furnished such object lessons of what Crokerism really meant, that campaigners found it difficult to spell-bind a New York audience when referring to Trusts. Hill exhibited less concern. In his peppery moments he let the chips fly regardless of Croker's proximity. His Elmira address (September 25), in which he keenly analysed the so-called Gold Standard Act, passed in the preceding March, subtly touched the hem of Bryan's garment. Its possible inadequacy had previously been disclosed, but it was left to Hill to point out that the Senate, with an Administration majority, had deliberately emasculated a House bill providing proper guarantees, thus leaving the situation of the currency of the country substantially as it was before, without safeguards against the policy of a President or Secretary of the Treasury hostile to gold. "It is an open secret," he continued, "that we are no more committed to a gold basis now than before the passage of the Act." Although doubt existed as to the correctness of his interpretation of the law, the advocates of sound money welcomed the speech, since it impressed upon the people the danger of committing the administration to a chronic agitator opposed to the gold standard.

The subject, however, about which the Democratic orator never tired of speaking was Roosevelt. As he had finished most of his work as Governor, Roosevelt, following the example of Governor Cleveland, decided not to resign the office; but instead of remaining in Albany he toured the West. He was a resourceful campaigner, taking all knowledge as his province, and apparently assuming infallibility. "For the love of Christ, gentlemen," said Oliver Cromwell to the Commons, "I beseech you to think it is possible you may be mistaken." But Roosevelt, seemingly having no such thought, drew the most bitter, sarcastic fire of his opponents, who not only belittled his service in Cuba, criticised his acts as Governor, and charged him with being wiser than Dewey respecting the character of the Filipinos, but searched his previously published writings for campaign material. In his *Life of Benton* he ventured the opinion that "in the long run a Quaker might be as undesirable a citizen as a duellist." In a magazine article he pronounced a cowboy, even when drunk, a more interesting companion than the ordinary farmer or artisan. These quotations became texts for speakers, who circulated them broadcast among the affected classes. His explanations added to the merriment. Of the Quaker quotation, he said: "It was written fifteen years ago, but were I now to rewrite the sentence I should certainly so phrase it that it could not be construed as offensive to the Society of Friends." This is frank and honest, said his critics, who paraphrased it: "When I wrote it I never dreamed that I should live to be in need of Quaker votes." Of his tribute to the cowboy he was even more penitent. "That was written before I had formed my present extensive acquaintance among farmers and artisans, and found out what an extremely fine class of citizens they are." It sounded a bit odd for the blunt, fearless Colonel to coo so plaintively.

Nor did Roosevelt's prolonged absence from the State escape criticism. Speaking of the Tammany ice-trust, which

became a prominent issue in New York State and elsewhere, Bryan declared that Republicans need not worry, "for as long as the Governor is out West making speeches they may be sure nobody is being hurt, otherwise he would come home and kill it." Roosevelt replied that he'd be home early enough to bridle Tammany. He returned on October 16, and a few days later his famous letter appeared calling the attention of Mayor Van Wyck to the official order of Chief of Police Devery, in which the latter directed his subordinates to disregard the Chief of the State Election Bureau, John McCulloch, a Republican. "Unless you immediately secure the recall of this order," he wrote, "I shall hold you personally responsible as the head of the city government for the action of the Chief of Police, if it should result in any breach of the peace, or intimidation, or any crime whatever against the election law." Similar letters of warning were addressed to the Sheriff and District Attorney of New York County. The Mayor and Sheriff took prompt action, Chief Devery rescinding the obnoxious order, which resulted in an orderly and honest election. Upon the refusal of the District Attorney who assumed an attitude of defiance, Roosevelt promptly removed him from office. He was still the fighting Governor.

Other disturbing events occurred in the New York canvass. Several important journals⁷ and many notable Democrats refused to support Bryan,⁸ while the Gold Democrats, who organised in 1896, deemed it inadvisable to nominate a third ticket, since it would tend to strengthen the Nebraskan by reducing the vote for McKinley. A more serious set-back was the failure of an independent anti-Administration movement among Republicans, who endorsed the sentiment-making speech of Senator Hoar of Massachusetts in opposition to the policy of Imperialism. He confessed that

⁷ The *Herald*, *World* and *Brooklyn Eagle*.

⁸ To the great surprise and regret of his friends, Edward M. Shepard, in an earnest letter, declared his support of Bryan.

approving letters, favouring a revolt, poured in upon him at the rate of five hundred a day; but the Senator had no disposition to help elect Bryan. "I disagreed with him and his party," he wrote, "as to every other issue then pending before the American people. So differing with him, I found nothing in his attitude or that of his party to induce me to support him or even to inspire my confidence in their settlement of the question of Imperialism or expansion."

At this point the Senator interjected a reminiscence which showed that Bryan himself had as little faith in the success of his free-silver policy as David B. Hill. "In the height of the contest over the confirmation of the treaty with Spain," he continued, "Mr. Bryan came to Washington for the express purpose of urging his followers in the Senate to support the treaty and let the question of what should be done with our conquest be settled in the coming campaign. He urged upon them, as I was told by several Democrats at the time who did not take his advice, that the Democratic party could not hope to win a victory on the financial questions at stake after they had been beaten in time of adversity; and that they must have this issue for the coming campaign. After that it became impossible to defeat the treaty, so that Bryan's followers who voted in the Senate for the treaty, next to a very few men who controlled the policy of the Republican party, were responsible for the result."⁹

Despite setbacks and discouragements, however, the Bryan forces exceeded the enthusiasm of 1896. Tammany especially put up a real fight, its parades and big meetings greatly rivalling in spectacular effects the interest of four years before. Croker claimed 85,000 plurality. The returns, however, although more favourable in New York City and State, fell far short of Democratic expectations, while in the West, especially in the mining States of Colorado, Idaho, and Utah, as well as on the Pacific Coast, McKinley's vote greatly increased. Kansas and South Dakota, which sup-

⁹ George F. Hoar, *Autobiography*, Vol. 2, pp. 322-3.

ported Bryan in 1896, now rejected him. To cap the climax, Bryan lost his own State.¹⁰

Scarcely had Republicans realised the completeness of their victory before a tragedy occurred which chilled the heart of every true American. On the afternoon of Friday, September 6, 1901, in the music hall of The Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo, President McKinley, while receiving his fellow citizens, was shot by an assassin, his death occurring on Saturday morning, September 14. For reasons of weight connected with the administration of the government, Secretary of War Root requested Vice President Roosevelt, who had reached Buffalo on that day, to take the oath of office as President at once. Roosevelt replied: "I shall take the oath of office in obedience to your request, sir, and in doing so it shall be my aim to continue absolutely unbroken the policy of President McKinley, which has given peace, prosperity and honor to our country." Judge Hazel of the United States District Court, in the presence of the Cabinet, then administered the oath. Thereupon President Roosevelt appointed Thursday, September 19, a day of mourning and prayer throughout the United States. On that day the body of the late President lay in state in the Capitol at Washington, a public funeral being held in the afternoon. Probably none of President McKinley's predecessors serving their terms of office enjoyed greater popularity or was more universally mourned by his countrymen.

¹⁰ Vote for President in New York: McKinley, 822,013; Bryan, 678,462; plurality, 143,551. In 1896, 268,469. Woolley, Prohibition, 22,077; Debs, Social Democrat, 12,869; Malloney, Social Labour, 12,621.

Electoral vote: McKinley, 292; Bryan, 155.

For Governor, Odell, 804,859; Stanchfield, 693,733; plurality, 111,126. In 1896, plurality for Black over Porter and Griffin (gold Democrat), 186,294; McKinley over Odell, 17,154; Stanchfield over Bryan, 15,271. In 1896, McKinley over Black, 32,333; Porter over Bryan, 23,155.

Legislature: Senate, Reps. 35, Dems. 15; Assembly, Reps. 105, Dems. 45.

CHAPTER XXXII

CROKER AND SHEPARD CRUSHED

1901

AFTER the election of Mayor Van Wyck in 1897 the Citizens' Union wisely decided to keep in touch with the 150,000 independent voters who supported Seth Low. For this purpose it created a permanent organisation, which included a central committee in each borough, an association in each assembly district, and a general committee for Greater New York. In the campaigns of 1898 and 1899 it had co-operated with the local Bar Association, the City Club, and the Republican County Committee in the election of justices of the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile Mayor Van Wyck displaced former Mayor Strong's heads of departments, and by appointing Jacob Hess, a Republican, to the bi-partisan police board, secured the services of the notorious William T. Devery as chief of police, who had been dismissed from the Board in 1894.¹ These changes revived the old practice of protecting and levying tribute on illegal resorts. Indeed, the conditions became so openly vile, especially in the Tenth Ward (East Side) that Bishop Potter of the Episcopal Church addressed an open letter to the Mayor, charging that when "a minister of religion, a resident of the neighbourhood, goes to the headquarters of the police of the district to appeal for the protection of the young, the innocent, and the defenceless against the leprous harpies who are hired as runners and touters for the lowest and most infamous dens of vice, he is met not only with contempt and derision, but with the

¹ Hess subsequently testified that he knew before the Mayor appointed him that he must vote for Devery and the removal of John McCullagh, a Republican, Chief of the Election Bureau.

coarsest insult and obloquy. I affirm that such a virtual safeguarding of vice in the City of New York is a burning shame to any decent and civilised community . . . and I approach you, sir, to protest with all my power against a condition of things in which vice is not only tolerated, but shielded and encouraged by those whose sworn duty it is to repress and discourage it, and in the name of unsullied youth and innocence of young girls and their mothers, who, though living under conditions often of privation and the hard struggle for a livelihood, have in them every instinct of virtue and purity that are the ornaments of any so-called gentle-woman in the land."

The Bishop's letter naturally aroused a furor of indignation. Even the Mayor seemed to resent conditions. "I wish it distinctly understood," he said, in a letter to the Police Board, "that I shall hold to personal responsibility those who fail to exert themselves to suppress these conditions." The Chairman of the Board likewise affected indignation. "There is no use in mincing matters," he wrote. "It stands to reason when a vile place is running so openly day after day that every passer-by knows what it is, and can go in without any trouble, that the captain is getting some consideration for letting this thing go on." At a meeting of prominent citizens (November 27, 1900), called in protest, former Mayor Hewitt said: "Two years ago reform was sent to hell by a leading official of the Administration, and there reform seems to have remained for two years." Such publicity closed the disreputable house of which the Bishop complained within twenty-four hours; but a few days later it opened again. Soon after a raid, made under the direction of an assistant district attorney, disclosed a police captain, an active Tammany politician, talking in a friendly manner with the woman keeping the house.

This renewed the outcry for decency, and upon the advice of former Mayor Hewitt, who directed attention to the evils that flowed from a bi-partisan police commission, a

committee of fifteen, appointed to co-operate with other organisations having kindred objects in view, appealed to Governor Odell for a single Commissioner of Police. The Governor promptly responded, and on February 2, 1901, signed a bill creating such a Board. It accomplished nothing, however, since Mayor Van Wyck immediately appointed Michael G. Murphy, who at once re-designated Devery as chief. So the city continued to run wide open. It added tremendously to the public indignation that after the Committee of Fifteen had secured the indictment and suspension of three of the most notorious captains (August, 1901) Devery immediately restored them to duty and pay.

Such incidents made it easier for the Citizens' Union, then preparing for the mayoralty campaign. It had already issued an appeal favouring one non-partisan ticket, made up of men "whose character and reputation are such as to assure the public that they will not use their offices nor permit them to be used for any partisan purposes." This appeal received the general approval of the press and brought into conference eighteen delegates representing as many different bodies.² Some of these proved fake organisations, the President of one admitting that his was composed of only three persons. But altogether they represented the anti-Tammany elements that earnestly desired the separation of municipal from State and national politics, and a civic administration without spoils or favouritism or graft.

Since Strong and Low, the two preceding independent candidates for Mayor, had been Republicans, it was agreed that the nominee should be a Democrat. Then the hurly-burly began. The Germans wanted Herman Ridder, the editor of

² Republican County Committees of New York, Kings, Queens and Richmond Counties; Greater New York Democracy; Independent Democracy; City Democracy; German-American Municipal League of Brooklyn; German-American League of Manhattan; German-American Republican County Committee of New York; German-American Municipal League of Manhattan, and the German-American Citizens' League of Brooklyn.

the *Staats-Zeitung*; the Single Taxers of Brooklyn demanded Bird S. Coler; and the Greater New York Democracy, led by John C. Sheehan, advocated John DeWitt Warner. The Citizens' Union submitted George L. Rives, George Foster Peabody, R. Fulton Cutting and Edward M. Shepard. To solidify these various elements required many acrimonious conferences which continued throughout the summer. At the start Coler sprang into the canvass like an athlete. His previous activities, apparently in the interest of municipal honesty and purity, naturally commended him; but objections appeared because in supporting the Croker-made State ticket in 1900 his speeches revealed a mobility that seemed to cloud the sincerity of his reform pretensions. When his name was finally dropped, he began working his ready pen, sneering at "professional reformers" and their "stale platitudes."³ A few weeks later he sought to head the Tammany ticket, and received the cold toe of Croker's boot.

Other candidates gradually disappeared. Republicans objected to Warner's speeches attacking President McKinley and the conduct of the Spanish War; Peabody was thought to be insufficiently known to the whole community of Greater New York; Rives, cold and stately in manner, possessed none of the qualities of a popular candidate; while Cutting, though earnestly urged, declined because chairman of the Citizens' Union. In view of the active part taken in its organisation, he thought it unwise, if not immodest, to accept any public position at its hands. Perhaps the best fitted and most popular of the Democrats mentioned was Edward M. Shepard. His activities for good government were deeply rooted. Entering his profession at the age of twenty-one he quickly developed into something more than the ordinary careerist lawyer. As a civil service commissioner and chairman of the board, he kept the standard high. He seemed free from the infirmities of temper which breed hatred and the subtleties that invite suspicion and dis-

³ New York *Independent*, June, 1901.

trust; while his fearless condemnation of greed and graft when an independent candidate for mayor of Brooklyn showed a determination to shake himself free of party. In the mayoralty campaign of 1897 he paid Seth Low the highest tribute, and with equal zeal declared the Van Wyck ticket represented the most insolent and audacious as well as the most reckless assault upon the welfare of Greater New York. His leadership in the movement to nominate an independent Democrat for Governor in 1898 also added to his prestige. Moreover, everybody recognised his rare gifts, his uniform courtesy, and his high character as a patriotic citizen of a blameless life. To outsiders generally he seemed an ideal candidate for the then emergency, to which the conference delegates unanimously agreed.

But like Cutting, he, too, positively refused. His intimate friends, who believed him the logical candidate and sure of success at the polls, urged his acceptance on the ground of civic duty. But his mind was fixed. To Everett P. Wheeler he declared that his reasons for supporting Bryan in the preceding year, so ably set forth in a letter heretofore mentioned, still governed him. He thought the purchase of the Philippine Islands, the acquisition of Porto Rico, and the establishment of a government in Cuba, were fraught with danger to the Republic, and that it was most important, if the Democratic party hoped for success in 1904, that its organisation in New York should be kept intact. Unlike the old Barnburners he deemed it unnecessary to destroy the building to get rid of the rats. Nevertheless, he condemned the shameful practices that had been revealed, adding that he could not support a Tammany Mayor, but should go to Europe during the campaign.

The list of Democrats being exhausted, Seth Low received consideration. No element had previously advocated him, but all recognised him as a man of first-rate mind, and few doubted his fitness. Many Independents thought his brilliant campaign in 1897 entitled him to the nomination. Senator Platt sneered. The sedative influence of principle

did not work when it involved men whom he disliked. For all that, his serious mistake in 1897 had taught him a lesson, and he transferred responsibility to Robert C. Morris, president of the New York Republican County Committee. Morris was a kindly man, whose loyalty to friends did not affect his judgment, or leave unwatched anything in the realm of action. He recognised with acute anxiety the danger of dissension. The Germans still clung to Herman Ridder, and Otto Kempner's element refused to be reconciled, while the Croker machine in Manhattan and the McLaughlin machine in Brooklyn sowed tares from an open sack among the Fusion factions. With the aid of Timothy L. Woodruff, however, Morris deftly brushed aside the web of prejudices, secured Ridder's adherents, and finally obtained eleven of the eighteen votes for Low. A second ballot proved unanimous.

It had been previously agreed that if a Republican became the choice for Mayor, the nominees for other principal offices should be Democrats. Accordingly, Charles F. Fornes, a successful business man of German parentage, was nominated for president of the Board of Aldermen. It added to his strength that he had long served as president of the Catholic Club and treasurer of the Catholic Protectory. The selection of Edward M. Grout of Brooklyn, a law-partner of William J. Gaynor, for comptroller, secured to the ticket another able and public-spirited citizen. For district attorney William Travers Jerome encountered no opposition. His efficiency as a police magistrate and his well-known skill as an aggressive, experienced prosecutor gave him strength equal to that of Low. "So irreproachable has been his career," said the *Nation* (September 26), "so careful has he been in keeping within the limits of his judicial authority, that Tammany has been unable to check his pernicious activity in any way." The Republican city convention ratified this ticket on September 24.

Richard Croker, though still abroad, had not been unmindful of the work of the Citizens' Union. His emissaries, by

all the means known to a corrupt, dominating police, had sought to sow seeds of dissension among the affiliated, if not homogeneous, associations. But as the combination began to show a strong, unified purpose, he hurried back from England in August and took personal charge of the campaign. Not since Mayor Strong's nomination in 1894 had he faced such a well-organised opposition. He was then as now uneasily conscious of the falsity of his position, and rather than trust again to one of his own kind as he did in 1894, he boldly and to the astonishment of everybody acted with the decision that characterised his nomination of Abram S. Hewitt in 1886 by putting forward Edward M. Shepard, the reformer of reformers. A greater surprise came, however, when Shepard consented to be the candidate. It deeply grieved his friends and staggered the Citizens' Union. "What is he going to do?" asked the *Times*. "Manifestly he favours Tammany. He lends his distinguished name to that band of desperadoes to save them from impending destruction, to keep them alive and out of jail for two years." The *Sun* said: "He surrenders his good name for the sake of a chance to get office."

The more people thought of his sacrifice, the more it seemed to them the work of ambition. There was much gossip. Shrewd, wise old politicians of the "Jake" Hess type, who judged men wholly from the human side, suggested the "buzzing of a Presidential bee." "Why not?" asked the political wise-acres. "Of the available statesmen like David B. Hill, whose party regularity still keeps them in the public eye, none can get the Independent vote without which success at the polls is practically impossible. What more natural than that Shepard, who astonished his friends in 1900 by supporting Bryan and thus making himself 'regular,' should think the Democratic party needed a new man in 1904 as it did in 1884, and so thinking should prepare the way by becoming a reform Mayor?" Of course nobody among his associates regarded him as a self-seeker in the vulgar sense! Lawyers of high standing seldom are, espe-

cially if gilded with the prestige of exceptional literary merit such as adorned the biographer of President Van Buren.

Nevertheless, Shepard's opening speech gave character to the gossip. He made no apologies and asked no quarter. He began by vigorously attacking the Citizens' Union, charging that it had been hood-winked by the Republicans, and that Low's candidacy rested wholly upon a "partisan basis"—very different from 1897 "when President Low and I stood together." Then, it was "in every sense municipal,"—now it is "only partisan and factional." Long ago, he said, an edict went forth that "under no circumstances" would the Republican organisation of New York City support a Democrat for Mayor. While he retracted nothing of his avowed hostility to civic corruption, declaring he would continue to fight it in order "to bring to the Democratic party a useful and fruitful prestige, consistent in every way with the highest public service," he boasted that he was "a Democrat through and through," and that he had accepted the nomination "solely in the interest of the Democratic party."

David B. Hill, who relied upon the iron hand in the velvet glove, never made a more adroit speech. It put the Citizens' Union on the defensive; it left the impression that conferences of Republicans with other organisations had been neither open nor sincere; that Democrats qualified for the office of Mayor had been cunningly turned down; that Seth Low, having turned a somersault, was now only a partisan candidate, and that the Democrats associated with him on the ticket were simply ready-reckoners. Thus he opened the way for independent Democrats to return to the fold, especially those whom the spell of the old party name and the old party leaders held in leash. Deep politics also played its part in the appeal. It was not unknown that a movement on foot, headed by John C. Sheehan and quietly backed by William C. Whitney, proposed reorganising the Democratic party in opposition to Croker, and the winning of Whitney meant to Shepard the arrival of a Blücher.

Writing of the considerations that led him to accept the nomination, Shepard said: "The Brooklyn Democrats insisted upon a candidate quite unrelated to Tammany Hall, and of whom it would with good reason be believed that his determination was to reverse such of the methods of the city government as were under popular condemnation, and to undo and punish past wrong-doing. A very large part of the Tammany constituency in Manhattan, and, I think, most of its leaders, were heartily in sympathy with this requirement; and at last it was conceded."⁴ Whatever concessions had been made to Shepard, however, their value suddenly disappeared when Croker prepared a platform glorifying Tammany's record, and putting upon the ticket such men as Henry W. Unger, whose shameful acts as counsel for the criminals of the Tenth Ward had halted their trials.

"It must not be overlooked," said the *Staats-Zeitung*, the leading German daily in New York City, "that Shepard owes his nomination to the coalition between Tammany, rotten to the core, and the McLaughlin machine of Brooklyn, just as corrupt, but not quite as brazen and obtuse. It is not possible for him to give the city good government with the tools these organisations have placed at his disposal." It was recalled also that Grover Cleveland, when asked to stand for Mayor of Buffalo, made consent depend upon the character of his associates on the ticket, whom he demanded should be nominated first. That Shepard did not do likewise showed, it was charged, that he either lacked Cleveland's courage and foresight, or suppressed these valuable qualities in the interest of his personal ambition.

As the campaign advanced Shepard developed an insensibility to Crokerism. Although no man of character could view without strong dislike the crimes of a commercialised police, Tammany's candidate saw an essential difference between their conduct and the doings of their approving boss,

⁴ *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1902.

who, once in a while, did a commendable act like the nomination of Abram S. Hewitt for Mayor in 1886.⁵ But to Croker's recent lack of sympathy with the efforts to rid the city of its greatest shame in the Tenth Ward, shown by his approval of Devery's restoration of the three indicted police captains to duty and pay, of which the voters were thinking, Shepard did not refer. Moreover, in former years, he had frequently declared that Tammany Hall was "the disintegrating and corrupting power" in the city. Now, however, he denied (October 17) the right of a Mayor to use his power to "disintegrate Tammany Hall," alleging that it would be "gross treason to the cause of government." This recalled a line in the verses of Joseph Rodman Drake—"And reason is treason in Tammany Hall."⁶ When asked by a reporter of the *Herald* if he intended, in the event of his election, to retain Devery, he replied: "That is a hypothetical question. I have nothing to say on the subject." To this the *Press* retorted: "He is the thinnest veil ever used to mask the face of a political burglar entering a municipal household."

Never did a local election in New York City excite more active interest. Meetings were held everywhere, the voters of Flushing showing no less concern than those of Manhattan. Low, Shepard, Bourke Cockran, Jerome, and other prominent speakers, made the canvass attractive, while William C. Whitney, the day after Tammany's Municipal Assembly granted the Elm Street franchise to the Metropolitan Railway Company, appeared as an earnest ally of Shepard.⁷ Of the work of the press, Shepard himself gave

⁵ *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1902.

⁶ Published in the *Evening Post* in 1819 under the nom de plume of "Croaker."

⁷ "Attention should be directed to the strange coincidence between Mr. Whitney's letter and the granting of the Elm Street franchise. . . . The franchise ordinance had been 'hung up' in the Municipal Assembly for several months, but the day after it was 'put through' Mr. Whitney said: 'No one, in my opinion, can read Mr. Shepard's Tammany Hall speech and avoid the conviction that a man of rare capacity and breadth

a vivid description: "The newspapers," he said, "estimated, with practical genius, the danger of scattering fire, and the advantage of a specific target, from which their range should never be diverted, and which should have about it a personal and familiar picturesqueness sure to hold popular attention. This they found in Richard Croker, the leader of Tammany Hall. In cartoons, and in the virile and unweariedly continuous work of reporters and editorial writers alike, they held him up as a heavy, brutal, dull, insolent, corrupt, tyrannical, reckless, unreasoning, absentee political boss."⁸

Of the speakers William Travers Jerome provoked the greatest enthusiasm and drew the largest audiences. "He became," says Shepard, "the hero or Prince Rupert of the campaign. Sounding the single note of a corrupt alliance between crime and the police force under the Democratic administration, he addressed his appeal to the simplest and strongest sense of morality. Better than any one else he adopted the text sternly given by Bishop Potter. In effective, often rude, but often, also, most impressive manner, he produced the very deepest impression of his own truth-telling sincerity and utter courage. He was followed and listened to as was no other candidate. He had the burning zeal of a true crusader."⁹ The Citizens' Union pronounced him "its winning card."

Nevertheless, the result was not apparent. No city paper hazarded a prophecy. During the first half of the campaign Shepard thought the drift tended in his favour, and although he sensed a reaction as election day approached, he regarded himself immune. He seemed to have the defect, perhaps not uncommon with lawyers, of conceiving

of view has arisen to claim public attention. It will be hailed all over the country by the Democrats as marking the advent of a man capable of the highest order of political leadership.'" *The Nation*, October 31, 1901.

⁸ *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1902.

⁹ *Ibid.*

the facts to be as he wished them. Indeed, there is no evidence that he ever recognised the moral weakness of his position as measured by the men with whom he formerly campaigned. He blindly supported Tammany militant, expecting that greater reward intimated by Whitney through Tammany triumphant. He scouted the idea, expressed by former intimate friends, that Tammany, by loading the ticket with undesirable associates, thereby indicated an intention of not electing him. He had the feeling of Mr. Micawber after his wife had repeatedly assured him that she would never desert him: "My dear, I am not conscious that you are expected to do anything of the sort."

The result, however, was a stunning blow. Tammany had the offices, the police, the prestige of four years of absolute control, and an unlimited bank account; but one day's fall of the ballots buried them.¹⁰ In Greater New York the Fusionists elected the mayor, comptroller, president of the Board of Aldermen, and three of the five Borough presidents, besides all county officers and three out of four

¹⁰	<i>Low</i>	<i>Shepard</i>
Manhattan and Bronx	162,298	156,631
Brooklyn	114,625	88,858
Queens	13,118	13,679
Richmond	6,772	6,009
	296,813	265,177

Total other candidates, 17,312.
Low's plurality, 31,636. Majority, 17,312.

New York County

Dist. Atty.	Jerome, F.	167,960	Unger, D.	149,783
Sheriff	O'Brien, F.	161,181	Oakley, D.	155,872
Clerk	Hamilton, F. ...	161,597	Fahrbach, D.	155,042

Justice's Supreme Court Dist.

Samuel Greenbaum, F. ..	172,302	Robert Van Wyck, D. ...	129,476
John P. Clarke, F.	160,552	Charles H. Knox, D.	152,235
James A. Blanchard, F. ..	165,435	Charles W. Dayton, D. ..	153,970

judges of the Supreme Court in the first judicial district. It was an uprising of the common people. In a tenement-house district on the East Side, in which Tammany in 1897 polled 2,123 more votes than Low and Tracy together, Shepard received only 718 votes more than Low, and Unger only 325 more than Jerome. Croker was crushed, and Mayor Van Wyck, nominated for a judge of the Supreme Court, ran 30,000 behind other defeated candidates for the same Court. It was a day of humiliation.

Shepard's disappointment was especially painful. To be defeated in every borough except one, in what he had termed a "partisan contest," proved that he had entirely misjudged the passion of the people to escape from the grip of Crokerism. It was a verdict of unbelief in his sincerity, as well as in his ability to reform Tammany within Tammany. The insignificant proportion of intelligent men whom he blinded by his ingenious appeal to partisanship showed the general distrust. Of those conspicuously active in the organisation of the Citizens' Union, only George F. Peabody upheld him. This was small comfort, since Peabody's personal relations with him hardly permitted his doing otherwise.

Shepard attributed his defeat chiefly to Devery and Jerome. "With singular fatuity, under the goading of the press," he wrote, "Devery indulged, until the eve of election, in crude utterances which strengthened the impression of his abuses and oppressions. His very energy seemed to possess a baneful fury exquisitely disturbing to every person intelligently concerned for Democratic success. . . . Jerome's speeches, sounding the single note of a corrupt alliance between crime and the police force, became the dominant feature near the end of the struggle. Until then disinterested judges believed that the Democratic candidate for Mayor would be chosen by a narrow majority."¹¹

There is an old saying that a bad workman always complains of his tools. The *Nation* (November 7), however,

¹¹ *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1902.

showed Shepard, as the prophet Nathan did David, that he alone caused his defeat. "Two personalities in this campaign," it said, "have been living illustrations of the truth that a moral question in a great public debate will not down. In spite of Mr. Shepard's high character and great powers of political advocacy, he has not been able to keep men from asking, 'Are you for vice, or against it?' 'Do you defend thieves in office?' 'Are you for protecting crime or for punishing it?' And the progress of his campaign has shown that the fearful handicap under which he laboured has been a moral one. He has been compelled to keep silent about rascally candidates for office or else to speak of them as his 'coadjutors.' He has had to go about like a Roman convict chained to a corpse; and there was almost a recognition, in his last appeal to voters, of the body of death from which he had prayed to be delivered. In a really pathetic way he asked for votes in spite of the degrading companionship in which he had placed himself.

"On the other hand, we have seen in the person of Mr. Jerome that a just cause is better than eloquence, and a fearless stand upon fundamental morals more effective than all the skill of the clever politician. Mr. Jerome has done what no candidate for office in New York has done within recent years. He has aroused moral enthusiasm in high and low; stirred cynical and despondent men of the wealthier classes as nothing political ever moved them before; and made himself a sort of figure of hope, a champion at last raised up for the oppressed poor. He has done this by simple truthfulness of speech. He has not spoken of thieves as if they were honest men. To him crime has been crime, even when committed by a politician, and the Ten Commandments have not budged even for the sake of a rich corruptionist."

As people thus studied the character of Shepard's campaign they found it difficult to speak with moderation, wondering more and more why one, with his ample possessions, wholesome temperament, and honourable record for well-

doing, could make such a "right about" movement. The wise man, however, who understood the frailties of men, and had witnessed similar lapses in others, knew his slip sourced in an overweening ambition for high political preferment. "By that sin fell the angels."

CHAPTER XXXIII

ODELL'S NARROW ESCAPE

1901-1902

ALTHOUGH Theodore Roosevelt's reforming administration as Governor had won high praise from very different people, the change to Benjamin B. Odell, a typical machine representative, did not disturb party relations. Even those who distrusted Governors with conservative instincts and sympathies thought it a fair compromise, since Odell had shown on various occasions an independence of boss control. Wise men, however, marvelled that Platt took the chance of making him Governor. In fact the Senator's special friends, believing that he underrated Odell's backbone, warned him against an imminent rival. But no one made wry faces in public.

Meantime, the quiet business-man from Newburgh had become a close student of State affairs, the result of which appeared in a legislative message (January 2) that kept office-holders on the anxious seat. Roosevelt had worked on lines of the humanities, limiting hours of labour for women and children, improving tenement-house conditions and providing for the introduction of new methods to safeguard life. Odell stressed economy and the efficiency which accompanies economy. He called attention to the extravagant expenditures for collecting the collateral inheritance-tax, holding that at least one-half of the expense might be saved. He recommended that laws fix the number and compensation of legislative employés, and that a "thorough pruning" of the clerical help in the departments be made, suggesting that items of expenditure in appropriation bills be set forth more in detail, "to give fuller effect to the veto power of the Executive against unnecessary expenditures."

Although the services of special attorneys in certain cases might be justified, he declared their employment, especially by the Lunacy Commission and Forest Preserve Board, was unnecessary, since the work could be done as well and without additional expense by the State's legal department. He coolly recommended the abolition of sinecures, some of which he named, and denounced the multiplication of expensive commissions as a "great evil," advising that the Board of Mediation and Arbitration, the Bureau of Labour Statistics, and the State Factory Inspector's department, be consolidated into a Department of Labour, which could better conserve the interests of labour and save one-half the annual expense. He advocated a single commissioner in place of twelve members of the Charities Board, eight members of the Prison Board, and three members of the Board of Health, and approved a consolidation of the Forest Preserve Board and of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission. "Through wasteful extravagance," he said, "the expenditure for printing had increased in twenty years from \$108,435 to \$583,191." He urged the substitution of salaries in place of the fee system by which three county offices in New York and Brooklyn received "grossly excessive incomes," amounting in some cases to \$100,000 a year. His most startling suggestion was that "with no harm to the institutions under control of the Lunacy Commission, a saving could be immediately effected of at least three-quarters of a million dollars."

Not since Governor Tilden (1875) called attention to "the ordinary conduct of Government" had such an array of facts been presented in the interest of economy, efficiency, and justice in the administration of the State. Other Governors either dodged the wearisome details, or, like Roosevelt, had expressed a hope that economy might be practised. But upon a subject so vitally important no pains were too great for Governor Odell. With an appallingly cool hand he touched each sore spot, showing where savings might easily be made, which would total a sum sufficient to pay

the interest on the State debt. These drastic, discriminating recommendations at once proved him the type of Governor that existing conditions demanded, and people and press heartily approved.

The message, however, irritated Platt. He advocated the State taking over the police forces of the cities as it had already taken over the Excise Department, and relied upon Odell to urge the passage of a measure placing their control under a State Commission. The Governor coolly disappointed these expectations, which Platt entitled "Odell's first act of insubordination." A more presumptuous sin was the Governor's appointment, without previous consultation, of a superintendent of public works. For such treason he became an object of real distrust. The offence, however, which startled the Senator into a belief that he had really been thrust aside, grew out of a demand of the Citizens' Union for relief from conditions in New York City, made intolerable by a corrupt police force dominated by the notorious Devery. To cure the evil the Senator again urged a State Commission. The Governor preferred a single police commissioner in place of the four-headed bi-partisan Police Board. When this plan, approved on February 22 (1901), failed to give the desired relief, as explained in the preceding chapter, Platt demanded the removal of the three offending officials, or the passage of a Metropolitan Police bill. Odell declined to do either, intimating a veto if the Legislature passed such a measure. Thus the Governor publicly flung his glove in the Senator's face.

Many Republicans hailed the act as a declaration of independence, while the independent press, extolling the manhood of the Governor, contrasted it with the Platt-Roosevelt breakfasts behind closed doors, whose pledges, made in secret, allowed each one to boast of having his own way. The Senator, fearful that his advertised break with Odell would weaken if not destroy his prestige, denied a "rupture," explaining that it was "only an honest difference of

opinion." Subsequently he called a conference of party leaders (March 24), which the Governor refused to attend. This alarmed many of the conferees—some fearing a party split; others, a disturbance of their own personal standing. Not a few, however, vexed at Odell's audacity in questioning the Senator's leadership, seemed spoiling for a fight. But an all-day's conference resulted in Platt's agreement not to press police legislation further, with an implied understanding that the Governor was "master" and the Senator "leader emeritus." "After that," wrote Platt, "the Governor consulted with me now and then, but went back to Albany and did things that were not according to my views. He distributed patronage among his allies and ignored the requests of my friends."¹

The Governor, however, had little reason to fear the "leader emeritus." His message had become an approved legislative programme, and with the firm grasp of a business man he carried through, with scarcely an exception, the economical measures recommended, placing to his credit the abolition of a direct State tax. This of itself put him among the most efficient of Governors. Moreover, respecting bills affecting Greater New York's interests he worked in harmony with Mayor Low, checking unwise charter-tinkering, refusing to infringe upon municipal home-rule, and preventing legislative scandals.

His message to the Legislature of 1902, in which the Republicans also had a large majority in each house,² strengthened the good impression made by his earlier work. In the matter of taxation he reported it necessary to raise by a general property tax only the constitutional requirement for the sinking fund. In other words, the State now renounced direct taxation. Among his specific recommendations he proposed to subject mortgages only to one tax of five mills for recording, and to require companies incorporated in other States, when doing business in New York,

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 430.

² Senate, Reps. 35, Dems. 15; Assembly, Reps. 106, Dems. 44.

to file a certificate of their incorporation and pay annually one mill per dollar as a franchise tax, resident stockholders being exempt. A more difficult reform but one of no less merit placed under one agency the purchase of all supplies for the several charitable institutions. Quite as important was his suggestion that receiverships for insurance and banking corporations be placed under control of the Banking and Insurance Departments during the period of their liquidation, thus doing away with extortionate fees. He also advised that the code be amended to require appeals in murder cases to be argued within six months after conviction; that the Governor be empowered to assign justices of the Supreme Court to districts wherever especially needed, and to designate county judges to hold trial terms anywhere in the State whenever necessary to clear the calendar. In considering "home-rule for cities" as applied to excise legislation, he recommended that no measures for local option on Sunday traffic be passed unless first submitted to, and approved by, a majority of the people of the whole State.

In attempting to carry out this important and, in some respects, progressive programme, he found the way full of obstacles. Opponents of his measures reorganising the management of the hospitals for the insane and the State charitable institutions became especially aggressive. His recording tax for mortgages met even a more determined resistance, while his canal legislation, modified and battered, became side-tracked. The Platt influence was not kindly; the philanthropic people who assumed to be most interested in the charitable institutions resented the creation of one agency to control the purchase of supplies; and large corporations bitterly opposed franchise taxes. The Governor, however, remained militant. At times he lost his characteristic poise, if not his temper, and once or twice resorted to the whip of a dominating boss; but in the end he secured the passage of the most important bills, including the abolition of useless State commissions, needed tene-

ment-house reforms revealed by Roosevelt's investigations, and the elimination of unnecessary expenses in supply bills. To cap the climax, he made the legislative session the shortest one in a century.³

Although the Governor's prestige was somewhat dimmed, the opening of the campaign preliminary to the nomination of candidates at the State convention, called to meet at Saratoga on September 23, found him assured of a re-nomination. Platt doubted its wisdom. Indeed, he bluntly told him "that he would commit a mistake in running again, considering the temper of the party,"⁴ and to prove it his friends fomented a well-developed revolt. But the Governor's application of frugal business methods to politics, coupled with an amazingly frank manner and the knack of being on the popular side of issues, had gained too strong a hold upon the party, and long before the convention assembled Platt called off "my old guard."⁵ The consideration of other candidates, picked in advance with due regard to their geographical location, included George R. Sheldon, a reputable banker of New York, for lieutenant-governor. President Roosevelt suggested him, and the Governor as well as Senator Platt had approved. But two days before the convention the *Brooklyn Standard-Union*, to the surprise of the leaders generally, alleged Sheldon's connections with the Whiskey and other Trusts. In view of the war then being made upon Trusts many politicians thought it a fatal handicap. It recalled how Atalanta lost the race through picking up a golden apple. Sheldon admitted he had reorganised an alcohol concern, but denied knowledge of its relation to the Whiskey Trust or of his present connection with it. Although the story, once on the wires, brought many protests, Platt refused to be influenced. He accepted Sheldon's explanation as sufficient, charged Timothy L. Woodruff with exploiting the matter in his own

³ January 2 to March 27, 1902.

⁴ *Autobiography*, p. 431.

⁵ *Ibid.*

interest, and set about pledging delegations until he regarded the "scare" over and the banker's nomination absolutely certain.⁶

Meantime the Governor, becoming deeply stirred over the affair by reports from friends at Saratoga and elsewhere, determined to do something in the most emphatic sense, and taking a special train reached Saratoga late on convention eve. In a brief interview with Platt, unsoftened by the language of diplomacy, he outlined his fears and demanded Sheldon's withdrawal. With equal emphasis the Senator declared that Sheldon would be nominated. Thereupon Odell joined a waiting body of despairing friends, who had usually in former days accepted Platt's judgment as final. Now they faced a man whose turn of mind was always toward action, and when he voiced the decision that Sheldon must withdraw, no other opinion obtained. It was likewise arranged to the satisfaction of Speaker Nixon of Chautauqua and Woodruff of Kings that State Senator Frank W. Higgins of Cattaraugus should be the nominee for lieutenant-governor.

Higgins was not a complex personage, or, in the usual sense, a self-seeking politician. He was a plain citizen, honest and sincere, successful in business and interested in whatever made for the general welfare, but never over-anxious for public preferment. However, when office came he gave it serious concern. Though he lacked the showier qualities and had only the ordinary power of compelling speech, his legislative career had been characterised by good judgment, good temper, and a will of his own. He occupied a unique position. He had never been rated a Platt man. He preferred Roosevelt, refused to vote for the confirmation of Louis F. Payn as insurance commissioner, and had favoured Odell. As chairman of the Senate finance committee he uniformly opposed legislative grabs, and when the Governor promulgated his programme of retrenchment he not only supported his economic measures, but originated

⁶ *Autobiography*, p. 435.

other reform bills that contributed to the low tax rate. Not wishing to interfere with Speaker Nixon's ambition, he had refused promotion, and even at the time of his selection for lieutenant-governor he was sleeping quietly, locked in his hotel apartment.

The Governor, having adjusted matters to his liking, indicated no disposition to confer further with the Senator. Conscious of his power he saw no necessity for multiplying words. But Platt worried. Though a large company thronged his rooms, the absence of Black and Ellsworth and John Raines and other influential leaders greatly disturbed him. Moreover, the morning of convention day had already dawned, messengers were reporting changes in his pledged delegations, and Sheldon, distressed and humiliated, talked of withdrawing. This forced the Senator to invite the Governor to another conference. Odell complied, taking with him former Governor Black and State Senator Ellsworth. It was longer than the earlier interview, with courteous inflexibility on one side and a tactical display of suppleness on the other. When it ended Sheldon had withdrawn, Higgins' selection was approved, and Platt had passed into an eclipse. At three o'clock in the morning the Governor returned to Albany.

A knowledge of the result, though generally satisfactory, did not stimulate the convention to many extraordinary displays of enthusiasm. Senator Platt took his seat unnoticed, and throughout the proceedings no one seemed fiercely anxious to regard him as indispensable. The announcement of Lemuel E. Quigg for temporary chairman provoked a volley of "noes." Like Platt he had gotten onto the wrong side of some things; but his speech, bright and cheery, was like the swinging of a censer before loyal Republicans. It proved a good preface to the platform, which, in temperate language, recited party achievements; pledged support to President Roosevelt in 1904; congratulated the party on the extension of republican institutions in the Philippine Islands with a view to their independence;

advocated reciprocity with Cuba; opposed Trusts; commended the Governor's policies and his promise to continue them; favoured canal enlargement and road improvement without restoration of a direct tax; and approved all the legislative measures which had resulted in lower taxes. Each paragraph received conventional approval until President Roosevelt's endorsement for 1904. This brought prolonged, deafening applause. Then, if not before, Platt recognised the mistake of his early opposition.

The presentation of candidates, enlivened by the happy witticisms of Job Hedges and the attractive rhetoric of former Governor Black, excited some enthusiasm. All were known as men of action, tact and firmness.⁷ O'Brien, an attorney, had served two terms in the Assembly; Miller, who was later to serve as an associate justice of the Court of Appeals and as Governor, was then first deputy in the office for which he was nominated; Bond had served as Engineer during the two preceding terms; Wickser, a public-spirited citizen of Buffalo, who had found time for civic activities, was the kind of "business man" the country always wants and seldom gets; and Werner, a most amiable judge of the Supreme Court, had recently been assigned to the Court of Appeals. Judged by the applause, however, Higgins was the popular man of the convention. At the mention of his name the delegates, springing to their feet, duplicated the ovation given to Roosevelt.

It is easy to understand that all this was particularly offensive to Sheldon's friends. They deeply resented the hasty action based upon exaggerated fears, and although apparently in harmony with the convention's action, candid observers admitted that a spirit of revolt could easily be kindled. To Platt especially the situation was most hu-

⁷ The ticket was as follows: Governor, Benjamin B. Odell, Orange Co.; Lt.-Gov., Frank W. Higgins, Cattaraugus; Sec. of State, John F. O'Brien, Clinton Co.; Comptroller, Nathan C. Miller, Cortland Co.; Treasurer, John G. Wickser, Erie Co.; Atty.-Gen., Henry B. Coman; Eng. and Sur., Edward A. Bond, Jefferson Co.

miliating. Few politicians could boast so long and complete an immunity from any form of convention neglect, and the treatment now accorded him seemed to many disproportioned to his alleged errors of judgment. He regarded himself the victim of small meanness. Yet he disdained to wince or to whimper under Odell's rod, and gave no audible sign of having a grievance.

On the Wednesday following (October 1) the Democratic State Convention assembled at Saratoga. The defeat of Edward M. Shepard for mayor of Greater New York in the preceding year had dismembered Tammany, side-tracked Edward Murphy Jr., and dethroned Richard Croker, who had gone to Europe—never again to assume political authority. For sixteen years Croker had remained the dominating leader of Tammany. When John Kelly died in 1886, the organisation, tired of the one man rule, designated Hugh Grant, Thomas F. Gilroy, W. Bourke Cockran and Richard Croker to act as a sort of council. Of these Grant had culture and popularity; Gilroy marked administrative ability; Cockran a wealth of scholarship and oratory; and Croker, though least in mental gifts, great strength and courage, with a wonderful capacity for making men love or fear him. Within a year he took absolute command. He radiated courage and aggressiveness. His leonine head, conspicuous jaw, penetrating eye, and commanding voice, indicated power. "His face," said T. P. O'Connor, the Irish politician and journalist, "might have been that of a prize-fighter. With grim lips tightly pressed together, with heavy brow, close-cropped beard, a face impassive, vigilant, and self-contained, and a figure rugged, strong, and thick-set, he certainly looked the part." His supreme quality was fighting. "He told me once," said Depew, "that if he suspected a district leader of plotting against him he would summon him to his office, stand him in a corner, seize him, and jump him up and down. After each jump Croker would ask, 'Are you square?' and he would always surrender." He had little of Tweed's slick-

ness, or Kelly's pretentiousness, or Murphy's opportunism. He never dealt in hypocrisy; but relied upon courage, strength, and energy to put a thing across. "What he lacked," said the *Baltimore American*, "was the vision that makes men love their country. The difference of vision was the chasmal difference between a Croker and a Roosevelt."

To be rid of such a political foe put David B. Hill in absolute control of the party. Never in his career had a better opportunity for satisfying its best opinion been presented. He could drop Bryanism, adjust the platform to his liking, and select the nominee for Governor. In other words, it was up to Hill to show whether animating ideals or his usual policy of self-interest guided him.

For Governor the party wanted Alton B. Parker, then chief-judge of the Court of Appeals. He had carried the State in 1897, and whatever his limitations or shortcomings he was very sincerely a Democrat. Fate had not mixed him up with reformers. Although old-fashioned in his political tendencies, with a grain of the aristocrat in his heart, he belonged distinctly to the politician class. He would be at home in Gath or in Askelon. Moreover, without being precocious his professional success early became assured. He spoke like a wise old man and acted like a young and courageous one. His service on the Supreme Court by appointment of Governor Hill gave him a wider reputation, while his unexpected election to the Court of Appeals had made his name familiar beyond the boundaries of the Commonwealth. Indeed, it was not difficult to understand that if elected Governor of the Empire State a nomination for the office of President of the United States would likely follow. Every Democrat of intelligence so understood it, and press and people urged his selection for Governor as a man of courage, whose name would be a synonym for intelligence and resolute will.

Hill fully realised the sentiment of the party, and as early as September 20 took the matter up with Parker, who indicated an unwillingness to exchange the office of chief

judge of the Court of Appeals for Governor. Then Hill pointed to the future. "You can defeat Odell. Coler may not," he said. "Once Governor you will make such a reputation that must assure you the Democratic nomination for President in 1904." To this Parker replied: "No sound-money Democrat like myself can be elected President in 1904. The leaders and the rank and file of the party, with a leaning toward free silver, will do their utmost to defeat a sound-money candidate, whoever he may be." Hill responded: "I had rather be nominated for the Presidency by either of the two great parties than hold any other office in the gift of the people."⁸ After this Hill might safely have left the matter to the convention. He had himself been forced to take a nomination. A similar fate had befallen Horatio Seymour in 1868. If he believed, as expressed in his interview, that Parker would run better than Coler, he could have trusted the convention to settle the question.

Coler's standing with his party was less secure than in 1900. His presidency of two Trust companies distressed the delegates. He appeared, also, to have a dual personality. Although no doubt existed as to his financial honesty, it was never quite certain whether principle dictated any political step he took. His coquetting in 1901 with both Croker and the Fusionists for the mayoralty indicated an unpleasing eagerness for political rewards and a feeble grasp of the proprieties. Moreover, his reasons for antagonising Croker in 1900, as subsequently disclosed in the *Brooklyn Eagle*,⁹ showed a strange disregard of tact. "For such antagonism," said the *Eagle*, "it is easy to find justification, since honourable men despise corruptionists. A phase of the Coler hostility to the Wigwam, however, will bear elaboration. He believed that Hill could nominate him for Governor in spite of Tammany's opposition, and that such opposition would strengthen him at the polls. So believing he provoked it. The game miscarried. It was not

⁸ Letter to the author, dated July 12, 1921.

⁹ May 23, 1902.

hostility such as commands admiration. It was not resentment against corruption. It was strategy. It was manœuvring. It was part of a plan looking to political promotion. And it is as much a part of Coler's history as his official record." This disclosure punctured Coler's reputation as a tactical performer and led to many slighting remarks. Yet many may have forgotten, but none could dispute, as none could estimate with precision, the good service he had rendered as an honest comptroller of courage and sagacity. Besides, the question was too much mixed up with party considerations.

Other candidates offered themselves. Jacob A. Cantor, the former State senator and then president of Manhattan, the oldest and least elastic of the new régime, imagined he might be useful. Many friends and several journals advocated Edward M. Shepard. Though not in the Cleveland tradition, he had shown high courage, kept regular, and made comparatively few enemies within his party. He was in no sense a swashbuckler in politics. The same could be said of John B. Stanchfield, who was much too good a lawyer to play the political game except as a diversion. Hill, however, gave little encouragement to these men. In a humdrum way they might do in some other capacity, but he had no disposition to allow the selection of one for Governor, whose adaptation for government would weaken his control of the machine or exclude him from hope in 1904.

However, he did not advertise his purpose to nominate Coler until the way was clear for its accomplishment. In dealing with contesting delegations his old self-will asserted itself. He excluded Devery to please Charles M. Murphy; he shut out the representatives of Smith M. Weed; he rejected the anti-Hill delegation from Albany, and admitted Conway's followers from Troy. "Our friends in these districts," he said, "have made the fight for us and we must stand by them." He was not satisfied, however, until Hugh McLaughlin, aged and infirm, appeared, accompanied by his wife, who wore a conspicuous Coler badge. With the sup-

port of Kings County thus assured, Hill unleashed his lieutenants, who zealously circulated the report that Parker, to whom the delegates still stoutly adhered, refused to give up the Court of Appeals with its salary of \$17,500. As the delegates knew of other objects of ambition besides a salary, they expressed their incredulity. Indeed, so secretly had Hill adjusted matters that the press, long after the convention adjourned, continued to charge him with manoeuvring for selfish purposes to keep Parker out of the race.¹⁰ Nor did the subsequent publication of Parker's interview¹¹ weaken the belief that had he been nominated his acceptance would have followed.

Although the fiction of a free and unbossed convention was widely advertised, Hill sat within the "inner room," directing rather than conferring with those who gained admission. Defeat, perhaps, had softened him, but one of his temperament did not easily become familiar. As one after another left him few knew more of his plans than when they entered. At the opening of the convention, however, all vociferously cheered him as he walked unaccompanied to his place with the Albany County delegation. Nor did he ever step more proudly. He had drafted the platform, selected each man for the ticket, picked the temporary and permanent chairmen,¹² designated the members of the several committees, and provided for the unseating of William S. Devery, Mayor Van Wyck's infamous chief of police, who, with much bluster, had been duly elected a delegate from the ninth assembly district. If no instructions were given to maintain silence respecting Bryan and Cleveland, the orators of the day understood. In fact, so carefully did they guard their words that one speaker, calling the roll of Democratic governors, omitted to name Governor Cleveland!

In his selection of a permanent chairman, Hill bowed to

¹⁰ Brooklyn *Eagle*, November 13, and New York *World*, November 14, 1902.

¹¹ New York *World*, November 15.

¹² John B. Stanchfield and Martin W. Littleton.

the wishes of Hugh McLaughlin and gained a sturdy friend. Martin W. Littleton, a young lawyer, was the silver-tongued orator of the Kings County Democracy. Like John W. Fellows he came from the South, and although then a resident of Brooklyn for only four or five years, he had played the party game with such loyalty that he soon became known as McLaughlin's adopted political son. Without adventitious aid a man of his qualifications was bound to climb, but with McLaughlin's help he leaped into prominence in Greater New York. Now as permanent chairman of a State convention, his unfailing courage, his hits from the shoulder, his clever phrases and neat expositions made his name familiar throughout the Commonwealth.

So carefully had Hill arranged matters, there seemed little chance of trouble until the notorious Devery, whose election as a delegate had kept his district in an uproar, appeared on a special train attended by a thousand shouters and a brass band. He was an unwelcome arrival. Although his opponent had the machine's support, he had the certificate. "No doubt existed of his absolute right to sit as the delegate," said *Harper's Weekly* (October 11). "He had won his fight by the same means as his opponent did not win his, and there was no shadow of justice for refusing him admittance." There is a story that Hill hesitated to exclude him, but he finally yielded to the Murphy influence, and the report of the committee on contested seats immediately illustrated the folly of unnecessarily disturbing a hornet's nest. Stanchfield, who could usually manage an audience as well as a jury, was helpless, while Devery, known as the Demosthenes of the ninth assembly district, dominated the convention like an enraged bull. Of Devery, it could be truthfully said that, however spotted and foul his record, when he opened his enormous mouth he never lost a hearer, whether man or boy. As he plead for "justice," his backers, whom Stanchfield proclaimed a "crowd of thugs and ruffians," punctuated every sentence with the refrain "give us justice." Never did an assembly become

more disorderly, while the delegates, irritated and impatient, thought it a grave blunder to stir up such a tumult involving only one delegate. When Devery and the galleries had exhausted their physical strength and the roll-call began, David B. Hill, rising in his place as the representative of Albany County, cast its vote to sustain the report. After this few had the nerve to do otherwise. Indeed, Devery received no votes until Queens County gave him 7. Rensselaer followed with 6, Suffolk with 2 and Wyoming and Yates 3 each. The vote stood 422 to 21. Then came a tempest of hisses for Hill, while the thousand shouters, headed by Devery and the band, paraded the streets and vented their wrathful plans for November.

Once rid of the hornets, the convention quickly finished its labours. The platform, adopted without a roll-call, touched all the issues new and old. Among other things it condemned the Administration's Philippine policy and Governor Odell's economic reforms; demanded justice for Cuba and an immediate revision of the tariff for revenue only; opposed combinations "commonly called Trusts," specifying the Beef and Coal Trusts, "which have raised prices until they threaten the lives of the people"; advised allowing to each municipality all the revenue derived from the so-called Raines excise law; favoured a barge canal and an appropriation of \$60,000,000 for its construction, the sum to be authorised by a popular vote; and advocated as a cure for the coal strike, then clouding the prosperity of the country, the national ownership and operation of the anthracite coal mines.

Eulogistic speeches placed the unopposed State candidates in nomination.¹⁸ Coler was declared "not a regular

¹⁸ The ticket was as follows: Governor, Bird S. Coler, Brooklyn; Lt.-Gov., Charles N. Bulger, Oswego; Secretary of State, Frank H. Mott, Jamestown; Comptroller, Charles M. Preston, Kingston; Treasurer, George R. Finch, Glens Falls; Attorney General, John Cunneen, Buffalo; Engineer and Surveyor, Richard W. Sherman, Utica; Court of Appeals, John Clinton Gray, New York. The votes for Governor stood: Coler, 422; Cantor, 6.

reformer, but a reformer among regulars." When Nathan Straus sought to speak in opposition, Littleton ruled that he must either nominate another or second a nomination. A shower of hisses followed as the distinguished philanthropist retired. Indeed, it was apparent throughout that the convention wanted another, and the slightest encouragement would probably have resulted in Parker's nomination. But the delegates were in a cage and could take only what Hill offered. As the result was announced, Coler 422, Cantor 6, a shout from Devery's marching hosts, proclaiming five thousand hostile votes in November, wafted into the convention hall.

In the campaign that followed speakers and press discussed the tariff, Governor Odell's tax reforms, the coal and beef trusts, and the historic coal strike soon to be settled by President Roosevelt. The most notable feature of the canvass, however, was Hill's so-called "freak plank," favouring government ownership of the anthracite coal mines.¹⁴ Most of the New York Democratic journals, including the *World* and the *Times*, while supporting Coler, rebuked the policy. The *Nation* (October 9) thought it "too glaringly a campaign dodge to be taken seriously." The *Brooklyn Eagle* (October 1) was more severe. "No party would think of taking the coal mines for public use," it said. "Only a vote-fishing demagogue would suggest it, and he only just before election and never after it. The idea might do for a starting nation, feeble in number and uncomplicated by economic conditions. The proposition

¹⁴ "Fuel, like water, being a public necessity, we advocate national ownership and operation of the mine as a solution of the problem which will relieve the country from the sufferings which follow differences between labour and capital in the anthracite mines. This course will insure peace, . . . relieve the consumer, . . . insure steady employment and ample compensation to labour, transfer children from the mines to the schools, preserve the stability of business interests and popular institutions of our country. Whatever differences of opinion may exist over other propositions of public ownership, the propriety of that policy as applied to anthracite coal mines must be apparent to every citizen."

now is not only impossible, but wicked. It is meant to inflame and deceive. It has received the detestation of every paper on the side of civilisation. The relation of it to 'Jeffersonian principles' is that of the hawk to the hen, or the wolf to the lamb."

Other journals held that the Federal Government, being limited to property necessary to its own needs, had no power to take coal mines, and even if it had the right, stronger cases for its interposition could be made for bituminous coal, iron mines, salt mines, building materials, and especially for articles of food. Indeed, the principle upheld by the former Governor, it was said, lay at the base of the Socialist system constructed by Karl Marx.

Hill entered with ardour into the campaign, speaking often and forcefully. Although in his senatorial days he had with some thoroughness studied the subject of public ownership of coal mines, he did not originate the plank. Indeed, when presented to him he stoutly objected, and finally, with some reluctance, acceded to it. But he did not deny that his acceptance of it sourced in a desire to take advantage of the unrest among the labouring classes growing out of the destructive strike, the responsibility for which he laid upon the Republicans. Moreover, his party's nomination of active labour agitators for members of the Senate and Assembly, especially in the counties of Schenectady, Saratoga, Washington and Warren, where street car strikes had continued for several months, strengthened the belief, common at least among Republicans, that he had made a combination with the labour unions. Nevertheless, he did not dodge the "freak plank" issue. Although a section of his party disapproved it, the rank and file applauded the policy as they did Bryanism and free-silver. They thought it high time, as the former Governor expressed it, that the profiteering, arrogant owners of the anthracite mines be put out of business. Referring to the alleged legal obstacles in the way, Hill suggested with the firmness of a good lawyer that the Government's right

of eminent domain could not be controlled by the State wherein the property is located, and that in the exercise of its power to devote private property to public uses Congress was the exclusive judge of the degree and quality of interest which are proper to be taken as well as of the necessity for taking it. Besides mentioning the taking of sites for postoffices, lighthouses, and other needed structures, in which the right was often exercised, he cited the then recent Act of Congress inaugurating an extensive system of irrigation works within the area of certain Western States, to be constructed by the Federal Government in the interest of the people. As to the taking of salt mines and other properties, whatever their merits, he denied that his proposal committed the party to them any more than President Roosevelt's speech on Trusts committed his party to the passage of a constitutional amendment investing the national government with full power over corporations in intra-state as well as interstate transactions. In the last analysis, he said, this meant price-fixing, which led straight to socialism. It could not be charged that Hill's mind was wholly innocent of wrong.

A feature of the campaign which attracted wide attention was the appearance of former President Cleveland. The abandonment of Bryan and free-silver, though dropped in silence, and the appeal for an immediate revision of the tariff, renewed his interest in party unity. He made no speeches, but in the discussion of the tariff, his pen proved true to its old-time courage. In his letter read at a spectacular meeting of the Manhattan Club, called to glorify Bird S. Coler, he warned his party to beware lest the Republicans seize its position as tariff reformers as they had seized the Democratic position as the historic champions of sound money.

The diplomatic play of the two parties respecting canal improvements occasioned much merriment. Both stood for a 1,000-ton barge enlargement at a cost of \$60,000,000—the Republicans advocating payment out of the surplus

left over from appropriations and taxes through a series of years, while the Democrats favoured an authorisation of the sum by a popular vote, which, under the Constitution, would require a direct tax. Thus the Republicans, it was said, appealed to canal counties with the enlargement idea and to anti-canal counties with the plan to make the cost imperceptible; whereas the Democrats balanced the favour of canal counties against anti-canal counties which opposed a direct tax. In other words, said the *Brooklyn Eagle* (October 11), "the Republicans seek to reassure all the counties, while the Democrats rely on the pro-canal counties to overwhelm by their votes the anti-canal counties."

As the campaign progressed it became apparent that the contest was between Greater New York and the rest of the State. The Democrats had been greatly encouraged by the presence in their convention of many New Yorkers, prominent in business, who rejoiced in the party's abandonment of the free-silver heresy. The representatives of large corporations had words of praise for the stand taken against Governor Odell's franchise tax-laws and tax-reforms. The party's insistence upon the need of an instant tariff revision to relieve industry, and its denunciation of the Administration's colonial policy, with a demand for the generous treatment of Cuba, brought commendation from unexpected quarters. "These deliverances are national politics," said *The Nation*, "are sound doctrine and should be embodied in law."

The Democrats, however, found their greatest encouragement in the wide-spread and deep dissatisfaction caused by Mayor Low's administration. Although it had cheapened the contract price of pavements, improved the style of municipal art, and put the system of education on a scientific basis, it had failed to complete new school structures or to repair old ones. Its slowness in remedying police conditions had exasperated the people until the papers loudest in support of the Fusion ticket in 1901 had now become its severest critics. Moreover, a change in

the numbering of houses on the tax-lists had complicated the payment of taxes, while new and needless restrictions on trade disturbed every small shop-keeper. The Democratic orators rung the changes on these vexations, and many former Fusionists, unwilling to give the Low administration sufficient time to complete its reforms, accepted the pessimistic prophecies of Tammany and voted the Democratic ticket.

To Republicans the result was a crushing surprise. Greater New York gave Coler 122,000 plurality, the largest ever received by any candidate, reducing Odell's plurality in the State from 111,126 received in 1900 to 8,803.¹⁵ This loss, however, could not be charged wholly to the Low administration. "It is scarcely credible," said the *New York Herald* (November 6) "that Governor Odell's action in defeating a State constabulary in this city was forgotten by the Republican machine, or his equally independent course in forcing the withdrawal of Sheldon for lieutenant-governor." It suggested also that the Governor, by taxing corporations, had offended those interests, which, in resentment, turned over their campaign funds to Coler, who, as the head of a financial institution, was a satisfactory candidate.

However, Governor Odell had little cause to lament and nothing to blush for. Upon Hill, however, the party, bitterly disappointed and resentful, put the responsibility for its defeat. The refrain "Parker could have been elected," was heard from Buffalo to Montauk Point. Even the *Sun* (November 6) admitted that "with Hill and the coal plank out, nothing could have prevented a substantial victory." *Harper's Weekly*, a supporter of the Cleveland Democracy, declared that "the end of the crafty Hill's aspirations to

¹⁵ Total vote for Odell, 665,150; Coler, 656,347. Total vote for Manierre, Prohibition, 20,490; De Leon, Socialist Labour, 15,886; Socialist Democrat, 23,400; Populist, 16,429; total, 1,396,702. Vote in New York City, Coler, 192,735; Odell, 106,131. In Brooklyn, Coler, 110,634; Odell, 84,120.

the Presidency had been reached. He paltered to the unorganised and greatly overestimated forces of disorder and discontent." Coler suffered a decreased vote in Troy, Albany and Plattsburg, due to the unseating of their delegates, it was said, sufficient to defeat him.

But out of the wreck the Democrats saved two offices. The Prohibitionists, attracted to John Cunneen through the diplomatic representations of friends that he neither drank nor visited saloons, endorsed him for attorney-general, and their vote of 20,000 easily overcame the slender margin of his Republican opponent. It was later discovered, too, that the official count gave John Clinton Gray a tiny plurality for Judge of the Court of Appeals. Since the Court stood four to three in favor of the Republicans, the Democrats had urged his endorsement if for no other reason than to keep up the fiction of a non-partisan Court. The Republicans, however, still resenting the Maynard incident, refused to accept Gray. Thereupon the independent press, which took violent exception to Werner's nomination, influenced the needed votes. Thus it was that the able and very amiable Werner lost his seat but not his temper.

CHAPTER XXXIV

MAYOR LOW'S DEFEAT

1903

AT no time after the election of Mayor Low in 1901 did the Citizens' Union cease to maintain its non-partisan city organization. Its local committees varied in their activity, but the machinery of a well-disciplined party existed in all the Assembly districts, so that when its president, R. Fulton Cutting, called a conference on April 16 preparatory to the mayoralty campaign of 1903, nine hundred and fifty duly selected delegates assembled behind closed doors and emphasised the necessity of co-ordinate action based on a coherent plan. The conference did not choose candidates, or agree in all respects with Mayor Low, especially in the matter of rapid transit legislation; but resolutions, drawn in admirable temper, "congratulated the Low administration upon the substantial realisation of the expectations of its supporters and its effective demonstration of the splendid possibilities for city government by men of character and capacity when delivered from the fetters of partisan obligation." The conference then adjourned to September 10, when nominations would be made subject to the approval of the several anti-Tammany organizations.

Meanwhile an active propaganda began to prejudice independent Democrats against a Fusion movement on the ground that the election of a Democratic Mayor in 1903 would materially aid in the election of a Democratic President in 1904. David B. Hill sought to influence John C. Sheehan, leader of the Greater New York Democracy, arguing at length that this was the time for all good Democrats to get together and send a solid delegation to the next

Democratic National Convention. To this Sheehan replied: "We can't go into Tammany Hall this year. We are committed to Fusion." Hill marvelled at his apparent firmness. "This is the first time we have ever disagreed on a political question," he said, "and I want you now to do as I advise." Sheehan stood ready to die in the last ditch for Hill, but for the present he held himself free to decide which was the last ditch. Thus they parted.

To defeat such tactics prominent Fusionists vigorously advocated the nomination of an independent Democrat for mayor. It could not be denied that several anti-Tammany leaders yielded a qualified approval of the Low administration. Coler's record-breaking plurality, in the preceding year, showed that failure to punish several of Van Wyck's appointees for malfeasance had created distrust, while the management of the police did not please the people. Favors could still be purchased, and obnoxious partisanship often exhibited itself. The *New York News*, representing Tammany, declared Low "a non-partisan only when running for mayor." It charged that he actively supported Governor Odell in 1902, sustained intimate relations with the State and national administrations, visited President Roosevelt at Oyster Bay, and indicated a personal interest in strengthening anti-Democratic movements. "His reelection this year," it said, "will everywhere be accepted as a preliminary victory for Roosevelt."

Low himself was not blind to these criticisms. In a letter to Cutting immediately preceding the convention to select nominees, he recognised the potency of such objections. "As our municipal election comes in the year preceding the national convention," he said, "it will inevitably throw into the coming local canvass the maximum amount of party politics. This will make it as difficult as possible for the city, with its business and social interests far greater in importance than those of many States, to elect its municipal government from the point of view of its own interests only, instead of with an eye to the possible in-

direct bearing of the election upon State and national issues. For this reason I have found in certain quarters that are entirely friendly, the opinion that the present emergency perhaps calls for the nomination of an independent Democrat as the leader of the Fusion forces this year. I very much prefer that the conference should act upon that view, and in that event the candidate of the conference will have my hearty support."

Cutting recognised Low's logic. Coler's surprising plurality in Greater New York was a warning which could not be safely ignored, while the opinion of those independent Democrats, who approved the nomination of some one other than the Mayor, made a deep impression. The choice of a candidate, however, who possessed a running strength superior or even equal to Low's, did not appeal to him. William Travers Jerome, whose selection friends earnestly urged, was well equipped as a campaigner, always hitting straight from the shoulder, and having that happy sense of humour which saves a man from being hurt by the criticism or the satire of opponents; but the suggestion fell among thorns which sprang up and choked it. Possibly Cutting learned that Platt, who had no illusions as to the effect of the election upon the Presidential campaign, would not tolerate an independent Democrat. He recalled that the Senator had permitted, if not persuaded, Roosevelt to oppose Abram S. Hewitt in 1886, and in 1897 had deliberately put Tracy in Low's way. However, it is doubtful if Cutting, who was something of a boss himself, would have yielded to such fears had he deemed Low's election less certain than that of Jerome or some other independent Democrat. He did not easily surrender his convictions. He based his confidence of the Mayor's re-election upon the great improvement of the police force, including the suppression of systematic blackmail and the banishment of Tammany's wardmen—the keystone of the infamous "system"; the exodus of the most powerful crooks; the clearing up of red-light districts; the abolition of the purchase of promotions;

the better regulation of street traffic; the expenditure of fourteen millions in fourteen months for public schools; the reduction of the death-rate to the lowest point in the history of the city; the enforcement of sanitary laws and the suppression of prostitution in tenement houses; the establishment of new parks, recreation grounds and piers; important reforms in charities, corrections, street-cleaning, dock renting and repairing, increased water supply, observance of civil service, and especially upon the marvellous transformation wrought in the Borough of Brooklyn. Moreover, Cutting relied upon the intense loyalty of the Citizens' Union to the cause of good municipal government. Under his leadership it possessed all the machinery of an old established party, and he believed that with the former combination of Low, Grout, and Fornes it could put up a better fight than it did in 1901.

When the private conference or convention met on September 9, seventy-four delegates appeared,¹ with Cutting in the chair. After the reading of Mayor Low's letter, cited above, he was placed in nomination, and no other candidate being named, he received all the votes except those of the Greater New York and Kings County Democracy, who refrained from voting. Speaking for the former organisation, William H. Russell charged that the choice had become a contest between a Republican and a Democrat. "While we may not approve of Tammany Hall," he continued, "the Democrats feel that in view of the approaching national election they cannot vote for a Republican. I have nothing to say against Mayor Low, but I feel sure his renomination will be fatal to the Fusion cause. Several important factions with him before are now against him. Even the Re-

¹ It was made up of the following bodies: Citizens' Union, 16 delegates; Greater New York Democracy, 12; New York Republican County Committee, 13; Kings Rep. Co. Com., 5; Queens Rep. Co. Com., 2; Richmond Republicans, 3; Kings County Democracy, 6; Brooklyn German-American Municipal League, 7; Manhattan German-American Union, 5; Austro-Hungarian Anti-Tammany, 3; Italian American League, 2.

publican organisation is estranged. We are instructed to vote for an independent Democrat, and as such a candidate is not presented we must refrain from voting and report back for instructions." This statement coming from Russell, one of Mayor Low's appointees, irritated the Fusion leaders, who notified him that those who came there in any other spirit than to support a non-partisan municipal government were out of place. Notwithstanding, the Kings County Democracy also refrained from voting. It added to the disturbance that the proposal to renominate Edward M. Grout for comptroller likewise provoked hostility, four of the Kings County Democracy voting against him and two refusing to vote. Against the renomination of Charles V. Fornes for president of the Board of Aldermen, nothing was said, although the two captious organisations refrained from voting. Albeit, the old ticket was renominated.

The result of the conference started a flurry of opposition to Low's selection. The *Herald* regarded it a mistake; Edward M. Shepard thought "the thing he stands for is more important than himself"; and independent Democrats generally, though loyal to the anti-Tammany cause, considered Low's nomination of doubtful propriety. But the sensation of the day centered in the attack of William Travers Jerome. Although not a pronounced candidate, Jerome's over-zealous friends had aroused expectations, and very soon whispered hints of his defection became audible. To stir him into a characteristic eruption, Thomas A. Fulton, the paid secretary of the Citizens' Union, whom Mayor Low had refused to appoint as a water commissioner, addressed him confidentially (September 12) respecting Russell's remarks, charging that much of Low's support was insincere. Because of his absence from the city during the two preceding months, Jerome knew little of the real situation; but accepting the version of the disloyal clerk, he wrote a hot-headed communication (September 4) to Charles C. Nadal of the Citizens' Union, declaring that while Low had made an excellent Mayor and deserved

re-election on all public grounds, it was the speech of people that he could not be elected, since the Republican party was bankrupt in its treasury, traitorous in its purpose, and bent on knifing him. Jerome also accused the Citizens' Union of conducting its affairs on machine lines, not daring to hold an open convention, but resorting to private conferences and supporting Mayor Low "with braggart words on their lips and shame in their hearts." The next day Fulton wrote Jerome: "Low has not yet decided to take the nomination. A little more pounding and he will quit."²

The leaders of the Citizens' Union challenged Jerome to name the men or any man whose insincerity he questioned. This he declined to do "because my information is confidential"; but in obedience to Fulton he did "a little more pounding," denouncing the selection of Low as "the wickedest thing that has been done in political life in my recollection"; adding, as he gave the letter to the press: "They are going absolutely and with open eyes to a political defeat; and, what is more, to a revelation that the popular instinct that reformers do not ring true is a correct one."

The hot blaze he had kindled frightened Fulton, and to silence the brilliant letter-writer he blended advice with intimidation: "My Dear Jerome," he wrote (September 21), "You and I are sufficiently good friends to speak plainly to each other. . . . I have not the time for details and must wait until I see you. . . . But keep quiet, enjoy your holiday, come back, and pitch into your own work. You cannot do too much of that. A lawyer whom you know said to me today: 'Jerome's is the rottenest department in the city. He is not making good, and has the worst lot of assistants of any department.' That critic is a good Democrat and not your enemy. You have had some bad advice lately. Now try a change. Hurry up with your own work, start that procession to Sing Sing, if possible, and do not talk until October 1 at the earliest."

² See New York papers, September 16, 1903.

Jerome was furious. To be duped into conspiring with Fulton, Cutting's "political valet," as he called him, and then coolly threatened with an exposure of his own alleged short-comings if he did not shut up, made him vindictive as well as indiscreet. In this agitated state of mind, therefore, he gave the public press a communication addressed to Cutting, with Fulton's three letters.³ "To us," said the *Tribune* (September 24) "it seems as if, with his straightforward boldness, he might been expected to return the letters with the statement that while he did not approve of Mr. Low, he fought above-board and entered into no underhand plottings to set him aside. That would have been the way to avoid reproach and command admiration. But to conspire with 'Tommy' Fulton, and then fall out with him and publish his own indiscretions! Bah!" The next day the executive committee of the Citizens' Union requested and accepted Fulton's resignation.

Jerome admitted his sorry position. "I stand today apparently a discredited man in our community," he wrote to Cutting. "The public press is almost a unit in its condemnation." Nevertheless, he did not flinch. "There is not, I believe," he continued, "a newspaper in the city of New York whose reporters on political assignments have not reported to their 'desks' that a ticket with Mr. Low at its head must lose by a plurality estimated from forty to seventy-five thousands. With this known to thousands in Greater New York, the Citizens' Union is about to nominate Mr. Low, professing that they believe he can win. Is there any element of truth and sincerity in such a profession? If you or any man of your standing could say that this unpopularity of Mr. Low was because of what he had done in the cause of reform, you know without my saying so where I would stand. You have been sold a gold brick. The professionals in conference with you have scored under the wire like drivers at a country horse trot, and to no one's surprise and discomfiture more than theirs you have

³ For correspondence, see New York papers of September 23, 1903.

given the word 'Go!' when not a driver in the bunch expected to get away. . . . For God's sake pause, stop this business before it is too late. An intellect keen enough to see things as they are and a courage heroic enough to prevent what is imminent will not be misunderstood by the people, and will insure a victory at the polls in November for which it now seems visionary to hope."⁴

Jerome's letters, though helpful to Tammany, did not change the opinion of the Fusion leaders. "Can he in reason expect a Citizens' Union convention composed of thinking men to put aside on his say-so an executive whose official acts he in no way criticises?" asked the *Nation* (September 24). "Everybody knows the Mayor's foibles, he says, which were obvious when he was a candidate for the mayoralty in 1897. So doubtless they were. Then as now he lacked personal magnetism and warmth of manner. But the Seth Low of 1901 is not different from the Seth Low of 1897. Why, then, did Mr. Jerome not oppose his nomination two years ago on the ground of personal unfitness? He has not to-day a single reason to offer which would not have been equally valid then. In short, he would have us dispense with a most valuable executive because that official has not the same faculty of winning personal adherents and creating popular enthusiasm which he himself possesses. The Mayor, he says, is an egotist. Therefore turn him out. Should the convention accept it, they would deprive the city of the right to vote for a Mayor

⁴ Letter to Cutting, September 23.

To a reporter who inquired about Fulton's threat, Jerome replied: "I'll say this about it, that if anybody can deliver the goods with regard to the District-Attorney's office they are welcome to do it. No man need feel under any obligation of confidence." *Tribune*, September 23.

On the expiration of his term as District-Attorney in 1905, Jerome became an independent candidate for re-election, defeating the Democratic and Republican nominees. In 1904 he drafted and secured the passage of a law which empowered the Courts to call upon witnesses to give testimony against gambling houses.

who has a remarkable training for his position and has clearly shown sterling integrity, unusual executive powers, special fitness for dealing with financial problems, and unswerving devotion to the city's interest. An unblemished official record must be forgotten because of unsympathetic personal manners! And all this when Mr. Jerome himself has no candidate to suggest who would have all of Mr. Low's good qualities without his weaknesses. . . . Mayor Low has in the past proved fully as strong as the cause which he represented. There is no good reason to suppose that it will be otherwise this year."

Thus it became evident that the prophetic plea of Jerome did not disturb the men in control. Senator Platt declared the outlook very bright for Fusion success, and within a week enthusiastic conventions were held in all the Boroughs, approving the selection of Low, Grout, and Fornes. Of the Fusion candidates added to the ticket in Manhattan the Greater New York Democracy received the presidency of the Board of Aldermen, the independent Democracy the presidency of the Borough, and the Republicans the sheriff. In Brooklyn the Kings County Democracy took the presidency of the Borough. It was admitted that these candidates commanded the respect of the whole community.

Charles F. Murphy had nervously watched the Fusionists swing into line for the contest. Although he affected to believe the nomination of Low helpful to Tammany, he recognised the necessity of putting up a clean, compliant man for Mayor, and in his search he fixed upon George B. McClellan, then serving his fifth term in Congress. Though not especially gifted as a speaker or statesman, McClellan had a singularly engaging personality. Like his distinguished father, the General, he made friends in whatever company he happened to be. He was modest, highly moral, always courteous and honourable, never hasty or excitable, and did not aspire to the limelight. On fundamentals his mind was never in a state of confusion. Soon after his ad-

mission to the bar at the age of twenty-six (1891), he became President of the Board of Aldermen, calmly accepting the dogmas of his party and never after disappointing the Tammany leaders, whether acting as a general committeeman, an alderman or a congressman. Richard Croker had delighted to honour him, and in return McClellan had faithfully served him, but without personal reproach unless his carefully prepared speech, delivered at the Tammany city convention in 1901, earnestly endorsing Mayor Van Wyck's and Police Chief Devery's administration, could be accounted a stigma.

However that might be, Murphy sensed the need of other support, and with the tact of a shrewd political autocrat he began feeling his way to the heart of Edward M. Grout, who, next to Low, was the leading figure in the reform administration. It was an audacious scheme. Of all the Fusion orators in the campaign of 1901, Grout's criticism of Tammany Hall had weighed the most. He not only denied its being "a Democratic organisation," but declared it "a business investment, rotten and loathsome, the stench of which I have breathed directly at close quarters in my nostrils." Such an opinion, however, in no wise disturbed Murphy, an opportunist, without principle or policy except to retain power. It answered his purpose that Grout, who had faithfully guarded the city's financial interests, would satisfy the banks and strengthen his ticket. For a similar reason Murphy sought Charles V. Fornes' consent to accept Tammany's endorsement for president of the Board of Aldermen. He found Grout secretly sympathetic with his plan, for like the Greeks who tired of hearing Aristides called "The Just," Grout, in common with other humans, resented the reasons given for Low's selection, as if the then Mayor were the only man capable of governing the city. Moreover, the influence of Coler's phenomenal plurality, of Jerome's vigorous prophecy, and the disturbing action of the Greater New York Democracy, added to the uncertainty of his election on the Low ticket.

But even with Grout's friendly attitude, Murphy had moments of intense anxiety. Trouble threatened in various quarters. Devery's candidacy as the head of a so-called Independent People's Party, which some folks imagined would promote the fortunes of the Fusion ticket, seemed to be gathering a restless scum that belonged to his mass of healers. Lewis Nixon, formerly an upright leader of Tammany, announced his candidacy for mayor, declaring his intention, if not nominated by Tammany, of running independently. Edward M. Shepard also loomed up in the background as an independent. The attitude of Hugh McLaughlin, however, caused the deepest concern, since he opposed the selection of McClellan, through whom, he believed, Murphy would Tammanyise Brooklyn. In his imagination McLaughlin could see the Tiger stealthily crossing the Bridge, turning the city of churches into a red-light district, introducing Tweedism, and annihilating his own control. It intensified the patriarch's resentment that Murphy also proposed endorsing Grout and Fornes. "In case Mr. Murphy adheres to his published policy and imposes it upon the convention," said the Brooklyn *Citizen* (September 29), McLaughlin's personal organ, "it will not be in the power of local leaders to obscure the fact that Murphyism and a Kings County organisation, such as we now possess, cannot survive together. It is well that gentlemen of influence in Tammany who attach importance to the announcement that Kings County men will not bolt the convention, should lay this to heart."

This was the condition of things when the Democratic convention assembled in Carnegie Hall on the evening of October 1. The tremendous crowd obliged Murphy to obtain entrance by crawling through a window, while in the jam Edward Muller, leader of the Richmond Democracy, lost his watch and Congressman Sullivan an overcoat. During this disorder John L. Shea, chairman of the Kings County Executive Committee, obtained permission to read a petition, without disclosing its purpose, declaring that

if Grout and Fornes, "who have identified themselves with the most uncompromising enemies of the Democracy," should be nominated, "large numbers of our most honoured fellow Democrats would turn from such a ticket with open scorn." This prophecy had a decided chilling effect, which tended to restore order. A more acceptable speaker presented George B. McClellan for mayor, at the mention of whose name flags fluttered and everybody applauded except the Kings County Democracy. He was briefly pictured as a modest young man of good ability, unblemished character, and a true friend, who would do his duty, "swerved by no man, fearing nothing but dishonour, and capable of restoring Democracy to a place of high honour."

Then Martin W. Littleton, known as the silver-tongued orator of Brooklyn, took the stage. He was a Texan and a Democrat by birth, whose gift of speech and fidelity to McLaughlin quickly won him a place among party leaders. As chairman of the State convention in the preceding year, he had pleased former Governor Hill by ruling, at a critical moment, in Coler's favour, and now in rhythmic sentences he presented William J. Gaynor, McLaughlin's candidate for mayor, who had coöperated with Edward M. Shepard in the prosecution of McKane. Without hesitation Littleton threw down the gauntlet to Murphy, asking Democrats to rid themselves of the methods which had wrecked Tammany in the past. "Put Gaynor in the mayor's office," he said, "and every stealthy hand that is in the golden till of the city's treasury will drop its plunder; every violent hand that is raised in threat of the destruction of property will be arrested; every man who has created a partnership between his financial interests and the public service will surrender; every man who thrives upon the misfortunes of others, and every public officer who accepts pay for the perversion of his functions, and every man everywhere in all the public service who has abused and dishonoured the trust which he holds from the people, will flee to the uttermost and hide himself as from the wrath of Heaven."

This changed the earlier silence of Kings County into shouts and the deafening applause of Tammany into jeers, the roll-call revealing all the delegates for McClellan save those from Brooklyn, 408 to 219. Murphy smiled at the solid line up. The endorsement of Grout and Fornes followed, but not until the early morning hours, and after anger had found expression in scurrilous words and many blows.

Tammany's endorsement of Grout severely jolted the Fusionists. Despite a respectability that isolated him from the herd of Murphy's followers, he was in many ways something of a Philistine. As a campaigner he had few superiors. He never fell into repetition, or exaggeration, or into mere bombast, but in playing to an audience, however sedate or intellectual, he had the knack of playing to the gallery as well. Moreover, Wall Street trusted him. Under his direction as Comptroller the city's finances were safely administered, the sale of its bonds protected, and the worship of the "main chance" robbed of its grossness. In fact, his admirable administration would give wings to the Fusion ticket. But that no veil might obscure his future conduct, Cutting solicited a declaration concerning his attitude in the campaign. "While I have been gratified to learn that Tammany Hall is so fearful of defeat that it proposes to let part of our ticket be elected without contest," wrote the President of the Citizens' Union, "yet your acceptance of its nomination is inconceivable if in any way it involves remaining silent upon what the public and the Fusion allies regard as the foremost issue, the defeat of the existing management of Tammany Hall."⁵ In a long, studied reply, Grout, apparently conscious of the falsity of his position, declared he would not fail to say any word proper in the advocacy of the present administration, "no matter whom that word would offend"; but he would refrain from attacking Tammany Hall, citing as a precedent the action of Comptroller Myers in 1890, who was endorsed

⁵ New York papers, October 1, 1903.

by Tammany after his nomination by the People's Municipal League. The Fusionists declined to accept the Myers case as in point, since Myers pledged his earnest support to the anti-Tammany ticket, simply assuring Tammany that he would as heretofore conduct the financial affairs of the city upon a basis of wise economy in the common interests of all citizens, whereas Grout disclosed a disposition to remain neutral, thus avoiding the salient feature of the anti-Tammany campaign. It greatly offended the Fusionists, also, that Grout's letter plainly implied that if he and Fornes were elected the reformers would be successful regardless of the choice of a mayor. Aside from its egotism and hungry desire to be re-elected, this implication revealed not only an absolute indifference to Low's election, but a willingness to compliment McClellan as an equally desirable candidate.⁶ As it was apparent to the Fusion leaders, therefore, that no assistance could be expected from him or from Fornes in the stormy campaign about to be opened attacking Tammany, they replaced them with Frederick W. Heinrichs and Edward J. McGuire, both Democrats of the highest character and integrity and administrative ability. Nevertheless, many independent Democrats resented this action. It seemed to be dictated by some motive other than a desire to keep honest men in office, for what mattered it, they argued, who voted for them, since their integrity had been established?

Meanwhile, interest centered in the action of the Brooklyn Democrats. Bitter words voiced their opposition to the endorsement of Grout and Fornes. Moreover, a man of Hugh McLaughlin's temperament, jealous of his prestige and loyal to his friends, found it difficult to work with Murphy. They had some points in common, but while the elder possessed vastly more talent, the younger man, a babe in arms when McLaughlin was a district leader, outmatched him in the control of abundant patronage. It made him an autocrat, who could play the party game regardless of reg-

⁶ New York papers, October 1 and 2, 1903.

ularity. To the patriarch "regularity" strongly appealed, and though he interpreted it liberally, it could not, in his opinion, be extended to Grout and Fornes, who had ceased to be Democrats even in name, since they had long been acting with the hereditary enemies of that party. When the Democratic convention of Kings County assembled, therefore, it endorsed McClellan, refused unanimously to support Grout and Fornes, and nominated Littleton for president of the Borough of Brooklyn.

Thereupon Murphy transferred to Patrick H. McCarren authority to do whatever he deemed necessary to overturn the action of the convention. McCarren quickly accepted the job. When an amateur in politics, McLaughlin, proud of his ability and confident of his success, not only lifted him into the State Senate, but had kept the way open for his continuance in that office. Of late, however, hunger for advancement had made the Senator ungracious, and in 1902 he displayed the disposition of a rival by opposing Coler's nomination for governor, upon whom McLaughlin, with bowed shoulders and thoughtful frown, had set his heart. This ended the old man's allegiance. Murphy's need, therefore, now became McCarren's opportunity, and with such a pull he quickly strengthened his hold upon hungry, political place-seekers. Those who did not get the promise of a definite office had a clear understanding that as openings came they should not be overlooked. He also adroitly made the endorsement of Grout and Fornes turn upon "regularity," claiming that the convention of Greater New York, regularly called and representing the five Boroughs, in which Brooklyn had participated, must accept its action as regular. Littleton held otherwise. "I dispute the right and power of the dominant leader of Tammany Hall," he said, "to make nominees 'regular,' who by open declaration, are against the party"; adding, "I will not aid Mr. Murphy in his purpose to destroy the Democratic party of Brooklyn."

To the astonishment of Murphy, David B. Hill now ap-

peared in Brooklyn. It needed no admission and brooked no denial that the condition of affairs in Kings had greatly alarmed him. A transfer of leadership from McLaughlin to McCarren, who had sought to prevent the nomination of Coler at Saratoga in the preceding year, would necessarily weaken, if it did not rob him of the balance of power in the State, and although he could not then afford to incur the hostility of Murphy, he must sustain McLaughlin. Hill, however, never went "over the top," but behind the screen he supplied arguments and stiffened the timid. When the question of endorsing Grout and Fornes finally came before the Democratic General Committee of Kings County, therefore, it referred the matter by a vote of 148 to 141, to a committee of fifteen with power. The victory, however, lived only for a day. The spell of Murphy's many promises bewitched the committee, which decided to endorse the whole ticket "in order to keep regular."

It had been a bitter fight for McLaughlin in the face of a successful treachery within his own organisation. Many observers of his past political activities naturally thought his attitude a prolonged bluff, and the adverse report of his carefully selected committee of fifteen gave the impression that he had made his peace with Murphy. But those who reckoned on any human weakness deflecting a deliberate judgment had overlooked the emphatic nose, the tightly closed lips, and the granitic chin of McLaughlin, who, when disloyalty had completed its work, blistered the men willing to allow Tammany to pollute Brooklyn politics and Brooklyn homes. "Finally, what I wish to say is," he deliberately gave out for publication (October 23), "that the conflict now in progress is of more importance to the fathers and mothers, to the good brothers and pure sisters of Brooklyn, to the members of the churches, and to all men who desire to preserve Brooklyn from the prostitution of the 'red light' system, with its abominable cadets, than it is to me. I shall do my full duty, as I have thus far done, and the fault will not lie at my door if the people who de-

sire a pure moral atmosphere about their homes, fail to do what is incumbent upon them. At my hands there will never be toleration found for the infamies represented by Tammany and the Tammany ticket in this campaign."

The press opposed to Tammany supported McLaughlin's danger-signal. "Remembering the hideous saturnalia that acclaimed Van Wyck's election," said the *Tribune*, "McClellan's endorsement of it was a revolting revelation, if not of his moral character then of his mental calibre." Thus his endorsement became a text for bitter personal attacks by all the anti-Tammany press, including the six leading anti-Republican journals of Greater New York.⁷ Mayor Low, in his quiet, moderate manner, declared that McClellan's personal character offered no guarantee of security. "His narrow conception of loyalty and obligation to the nominating power," he said, "may be measured by his speech of two years ago endorsing Van Wyck's administration, when the city was horror-struck at the Devery infamies it fostered."

Edward T. Grout likewise provoked severe criticism. His opponents daily confronted him with extracts from his speeches made during the campaign of 1901. In his opinion Tammany Hall was then "a business investment," the controlling stock of which was held by the chief bosses "who naturally get most of the profits." He confessed having "breathed the stench of Tammany directly at close quarters," which had "helped to render it a thing of suspicion and scorn to Democratic, State and National conventions. Honest Democrats owe it no allegiance." Now, having yielded to the seductions of Murphy, he earnestly supported Tammany. In one of his trenchant speeches, Jerome, still "the Prince Rupert of Fusion," titled him "a turncoat" and "traitorous renegade."

With equal ruthlessness Murphy's orators denounced their opponents, stressing the claim that the election of a

⁷ The New York Times, World, Herald, Evening Post, Staats-Zeitung, and Brooklyn Eagle.

President in 1904 depended upon the choice of a Mayor. Indeed, it became the vital issue upon which McClellan and his champions relied for victory. Partisanship, said McClellan, can no more be divorced from the government of a municipality than from the control of a State or the Nation. "Parties exist in order that the aspirations of the majority, obtained by means of party machinery, may be attained. Success at the polls this year is not enough. It is only a step. We are not now fighting for the triumph of any one man or aggregation of men, but for Democratic supremacy throughout the Union. The members of the present so-called non-partisan city administration, in order to influence the election next year, have stopped at nothing in their efforts to direct the revenue, to control public appointments, and even to turn the police force into a political terrorism, for use on election day in 1904." Following the language of the Tammany platform, he charged that the Republican machine "planned, ordered and executed the nomination of Low with the hope of retaining Republican ascendancy in this Democratic city, that President Roosevelt might present himself for nomination as coming from a State and a city in sympathy with his political views." That this argument made a profound impression upon the masses of the party found abundant evidence in the speech of people. In his letter to Cutting, Mayor Low had voiced the danger.

The more Tammany pressed this argument, however, the more active independent Democrats of the Cleveland type became. Their campaign, led by William R. Grace, Charles S. Fairchild, William Hornblower, Peter B. Olney, Edward Cooper, and many others of similar character, developed into an enthusiastic movement for Low. They pooh-poohed the stock argument of confining the contest to party lines. The enormous plurality obtained by Coler in this city in 1902, they argued, must be accepted as conclusive proof that honest Democrats will have nothing to lose in 1904 by the re-election of Low this year. In fact, their influence would

be sensibly increased by a second defeat of Tammany Hall, since the party in the past forty years had acquired control of the Federal Government only when the Democratic candidate had been furiously assailed by the spokesman of that organisation, whose sole hope of success at this time lies in the effort of its candidates to confuse the public mind concerning the pivotal issue in the canvass. To them it was a contest for municipal government "administered honestly in the interest of all the people rather than in the interest of a few bent on plunder." McLaughlin and Littleton maintained the same bold position. "I may not fare so well at the polls," said Littleton, "but I shall retain my self-respect." In congratulating him for his courageous stand, Edward M. Shepard wrote: "Not in our day have the Democrats of Brooklyn had a more momentous party question presented them for decision." This sentiment, judged by the tremendous outpouring of all classes of citizens on October 29 to greet McLaughlin and Littleton seemed to have gripped the people of Brooklyn. The oldest residents could not recall a similar scene in the history of the city, which had witnessed many a great triumph. It was not applause; it was an emotional tumult,—a tempest.

But there were some disturbing developments. The Brooklyn Democratic Club failed to endorse Low, and the Kings County Democratic organisation refused Littleton the privilege of addressing its meetings. In speaking of influences to reclaim disaffected Brooklyn Democrats, the New York *Herald* referred to "certain great commercial interests which represented many millions invested in franchises in the five boroughs of the city, that prefer to deal with a Tammany Mayor rather than with Low." Moreover, John C. Sheehan had succeeded in splitting the Greater New York Democracy. Heavy colonisation in several assembly districts also began to appear, while the appointment by shiftily Republican officials of Tammany men for inspectors and ballot clerks plainly indicated collusion. Nevertheless, such confidence in Low's election possessed the Fusion mind

that these omens did not disturb it. Although Coler's plurality in 1902 plainly signified that Low's administration had become a weariness, it apparently did not occur to Cutting or to any of his staff that the most prominent apostle of regimentation could incur positive dislike. Yet no one probably, not even Murphy, suspected such a reaction as the election revealed, giving McClellan a plurality of 62,688.⁸ Cutting and his conferees thought Tammany might carry Manhattan, but that other boroughs, especially Brooklyn, would overcome it. To their amazement Richmond alone gave Low a plurality.

Post-mortem reasoning as to the cause of the Fusion overthrow became general. Everybody could point out some contributing element. Fifth Avenue struck hands with East Seventeenth Street; the displacement of Grout and Fornes; McClellan's greater ability and higher character than any Tammany nominee since Abram S. Hewitt; Low's sympathy with the National and State administrations; the artful raising of the partisan cry; Republican treachery; failure of Low to take care of those who supported him; too strict enforcement of the laws; insistence upon licensing all pedlar wagons, which cost him the East Side and the vote of the Broad and Wall Street office boys who lunched from push-carts; and, most farcical of all, President Roosevelt's alleged discrediting the son by failing to pay the slightest tribute of respect to General McClellan in his oration commemorating the New Jersey soldiers who fell at Antietam, although he commanded at the battle and subsequently served as Governor of the State. But the real reason generally accepted was that a plurality of the voters of Greater New York had tired of reform government.

⁸ Pluralities, McClellan, Manhattan and Bronx, 56,503; Brooklyn, 1,310; Queens, 5,114; Low, Richmond, 239. Total vote, McClellan, 372,882; Grout, 316,165; Fornes, 314,243; Low, 252,086; Heinrichs, 248,675; McGuire, 239,704; Devery for Mayor, 2,960; Furman, Socialist Dem., 16,956; Hunter, Socialist Labour, 5,205; McKee, Prohibition, 869.

CHAPTER XXXV

PLATT AND ODELL QUARREL

1904

ALTHOUGH the impression generally obtained that Coler's unprecedented vote for Governor in Greater New York in 1902 was due to dissatisfaction with Mayor Low's reform-administration, some unmistakable marks of betrayal created the belief that the Republican County organisation had been recreant. Evidence of similar shuffling usually existed after every election. But Odell's trifling plurality, having deeply shocked and humiliated him, seemed to accentuate the sin of treachery, and in obedience to his wishes a reorganisation of the committee substituted William Halpen for chairman in place of M. Linn Bruce, a friend of Senator Platt. Bruce, then in his early forties, was a lawyer-politician, loyal, clean, and of the highest integrity. The Governor did not distrust him, but he preferred an organisation of his own allies, and in spite of protests the Senator's friends became the victims of what they called "small meanness." This opened a quarrel between the Senator and the Governor which, though occasionally suspended, never healed.

The approaching election of a United States senator added to the bitterness. Although politicians who had profited by Platt's favour demanded his re-election, a canvass of the members-elect indicated an unsettled condition in the legislative mind. Platt's physical condition forbade any illusions as to his capacity for real service, while the need of a veritable statesman caused strained attention in many gatherings of intelligent men. But who could be substituted? There was talk of Elihu Root, then secretary of war, whose extraordinary gifts had already marked him

as an international figure. To him there could be no objection on the score of fitness, and several members in close sympathy with the Governor, notably Senators Edgar T. Brackett of Saratoga, Elon R. Brown of Jefferson, and Nathaniel A. Elsberg of New York, voiced their determination to vote for him. It was a formidable trio of able, independent lawyers of long legislative experience, and although their action sourced in a desire to control the organisation of the Senate, they not only regarded it a patriotic duty to send a better representative to the United States Senate, but they believed that under the forceful leadership of the Governor a fusion of the dissatisfied elements could accomplish it. But in the preceding Legislature the Governor had put through his tax reform and departmental reorganisation schemes with the dominating force exhibited in the compulsory withdrawal of Sheldon for lieutenant-governor and the reorganisation of the New York County Committee, and he feared that an effort to defeat Platt's re-election might react to his disadvantage in carrying out his legislative programme for the coming session.

Thus the way opened for Senator Platt's return. The caucus, however, passed off without a cheer or an enthusiastic word. More pathetic was the whispered prophecy, based upon his tottering steps, that an opportunity would soon be given to choose another better fitted for the high station. At the election, therefore, all Republicans answered "Platt" except Brackett, Brown and Elsberg, who voted for Root. The Democrats supported John B. Stanchfield. The independent press, in approving the course of the three Senators, severely criticised the Governor's attitude. "He has made it evident," said the *Nation* (January 15), "that to carry out his own plans he is willing to consent to an act which he knows to be both harmful to the State and repugnant to the moral sense of his party. He is ready to sacrifice party morality to party regularity, and to follow the methods of a boss instead of his own convictions."

Although the Governor quietly submitted to the re-elec-

tion of the Senator, the incident seriously disturbed Platt's faith in the strength of his own leadership. For more than a decade he had been the undisputed party leader in New York, setting up favourites and casting out the disobedient. The tractable Morton had bowed to his will; the refractory Black, as cynical as himself, had been tossed aside; and the irritating, bucking Roosevelt had been switched out of his way; but the inflexible Odell had withstood him. No sooner did he become Governor than he took the reins and the whip. If the Senator, prodded by his henchmen, occasionally offered feeble resistance, Odell boldly faced him or skilfully dodged. When told that Odell planned a reorganisation of the Legislature of 1904, Platt called a conference of the leaders. The Governor ignored the invitation and only two up-state supporters appeared.¹ "Why should they respond?" asked the *Evening Post*. "With respect to legislation at Albany, never was it so true as in 1904 that a breath from the Executive Chamber creates it and a breath destroys it." Said Whitelaw Reid: "Odell improved conditions by taking over Platt's leadership himself."²

Another despairing cry came when the Governor expressed a preference for an early State convention to elect delegates-at-large to the Republican National Convention, called to meet at Chicago on June 21. The Senator, assuming that he desired it during the legislative session when his control was undisputed, stoutly opposed it. At the meeting of the State Committee, however, it not only agreed upon April 11, the date fixed by the Governor, but it began talking of Odell for chairman of the committee in place of George W. Dunn, Platt's most trusted lieutenant. This unnerved the Senator, who called another "reconciliation conference" for March 20 to determine what, if any, part he retained in the leadership. The meeting was not precisely attractive. If it looked sanctimonious it also wore an ex-

¹ *Harper's Weekly*, January 9, 1904.

² *Life of Reid* (Cortissoz), Vol. 2, p. 259.

pression of cunning, and when the agreement was reduced to writing, as the Senator insisted, it seemed farcical.³ As the *Evening Post* said: "Odell got the goods and Platt the title." It added greatly to the merriment that the Senator seriously accepted the result as a victory.

For the Governor to add to his duties the chairmanship of the State Committee seemed as strange as it was unprecedented, and the formal announcement of the agreement subjected him to severe criticism within as well as without his party. He was dubbed at once "the Governor-Chairman." Naturally, Platt prophesied that it would be his political downfall. Another malcontent argued that a Governor must be vigilant in keeping down expenses, cutting off sinecures and exacting faithful service, while a State chairman is supposed to swell budgets, stuff departments with superfluous help, and use public officials on political work. How then, it was asked, can he be an honest Governor and a satisfactory party-head? The Democratic press quickly seized upon the phrase, "sinking the Governorship in his boss-ship." The chairman, said one, could secure party-funds and the Governor shape legislation for the benefit of the contributors. As Governor, said another, he can put one enemy out of office and as chairman keep another from getting into office. The potentialities of such a dual arrangement, said a third, are beyond the dream of avarice. Neither ridicule nor serious criticism, however, phased the Governor, while the organisation leaders, exhibiting an adamant nerve, stood firmly back of him. Of the thirty-seven members thirty voted to make him chairman. This ended the talk of becoming chairman of the Republican National Committee in the event of Roosevelt's

³ The agreement was as follows: "That Senator Platt should remain, as he has been in the past, the active leader of the party; that the Governor should become chairman of the State Committee, to be elected at the State Convention in April; and that in local contests for leadership neither Platt nor Odell should interfere in favour of or against any one." Platt, *Autobiography*, pp. 446-7.

nomination, which had been incited by the Governor's fidelity to the President, when the latter's part in the secession and declared independence of the Panama Republic seemed to create a serious obstacle in his way.

As between the Nicaragua and Panama Canal routes, many members of Congress, especially Senator Morgan of Alabama, who had studied the subject with great thoroughness, favoured the former as the cheaper and better, and on January 9, 1903, the House of Representatives adopted it. The Senate, however, substituted the Panama route and the House subsequently concurred, the act providing that unless a satisfactory arrangement could be made with the Republic of Colombia, "in a reasonable time," the Nicaragua route should be selected. Thereupon a treaty was concluded between the United States and Colombia, providing for the lease of a strip of territory across the isthmus six miles in width, for the term of one hundred years with the right of renewal, the United States having authority to land troops to protect the canal in the event Colombia proved unable to preserve order. In consideration of these concessions, the United States agreed to pay Colombia ten million dollars, and an annual rental after the lapse of nine years of a quarter of a million. The Senate ratified this agreement on May 17, 1903, but the Colombia Congress, after a long delay, presumably to obtain a larger purchase price, rejected it by a unanimous vote.

The friends of the Nicaragua route, claiming the condition "in a reasonable time" then became operative, urged the President to adopt that route; but the Chief Executive, relying upon his discretion to determine what was "a reasonable time," seemed in no hurry. Suddenly and without warning, on November 4, soon after the adjournment of the Colombia Congress, a bloodless revolution in the City of Panama resulted in a declaration of independence by the State of Panama. When Colombia undertook to move troops across the isthmus to suppress the insurrection, President Roosevelt directed the United States marines,

then serving in Colombia waters, to prevent the use of the Panama Railroad, basing his authority on an old treaty with New Granada, the predecessor of Colombia, by which the United States agreed to protect the free transit of the isthmus. Thus Panama accomplished its independence, and within a few days thereafter President Roosevelt formally recognised it.

The extent of our Government's interference in Colombia's domestic affairs was not then known, but it was easy to suspect that the insurrection, if not planned in Washington, was known to its agents, at least to the extent of having advance information as to what would happen. The known facts, however, showed that United States marines prevented Colombia from suppressing the rebellion. Friends of the President quickly justified the proceeding on the ground that the fictions of sovereignty over a small strip of territory should not be allowed to halt a great work for the welfare of all mankind. Others argued that he acted upon the principle of international eminent domain. On the other hand, the President's critics maintained that he had violated the fundamental principle of the equality of sovereign nations and the practice of equal and exact justice. Indeed, it seemed to be a mark of good breeding and unaffected loyalty to exploit the belief that Roosevelt was "temperamentally an unsafe man," lacking "the capacity of self-control," and "a proper conception of Presidential duties," being "spasmodic, erratic, sensational, spectacular, and arbitrary." Moreover, it was charged that he made war without the authority of Congress, and that under pretence of executing a great public policy he had violated treaty obligations, international usages, and Constitutional law.

It was to the credit of Governor Odell that from the first he advocated the nomination of the President. As early as in December, 1903, a group of railroad heads made preparations to secure opposition delegations from New Jersey, North Carolina, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and

California.⁴ Wall Street talked of him as "erratic and impulsive." Adams wrote: "Roosevelt, as every one knew, was always an amusing talker, and had the reputation of being indiscreet beyond any other man of great importance in the world except Kaiser Wilhelm."⁵ His good friend John Burroughs recognised his weaknesses. "If only Roosevelt had a little of Lincoln's meekness and forbearance," he said, "what an improvement it would be. But he has that terrible domineering pugnacity and desire to be before the public. He goes to extremes in denunciation, and his treatment of former friends is sometimes distressing. However, although he is imperious, he is fair-minded. He doesn't rank with Lincoln or Cleveland, but he'll make a big spot of some sort on our history."⁶ The independent press, severely criticising the "Panama recklessness," spoke of his "hair-trigger mind." Reid of the *Tribune* said: "One is lonely enough in the New York newspaper field at present in supporting the Administration."⁷ It added to the Governor's vision that he remained faithful when the boom for Senator Hanna, though in no wise encouraged by him, seemed so deeply rooted that it not only influenced Platt, but so plainly got upon the nerve of the President that, to the great disturbance of influential friends, he began counseling with alleged political leaders from various States, whom he had invited to call upon him."⁸

The Governor's fidelity greatly strengthened him at the State Convention which met in New York City on April 11. Indeed, it proved an Odell convention. Even the physical feebleness of the Senator seemed to exaggerate the strength

⁴ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 421.

⁵ *The Education of Henry Adams*, p. 464.

⁶ Johnson, *John Burroughs' Talks*, p. 287.

⁷ *Life of Reid*, Vol. 2, p. 294.

⁸ "The first man I met in the Arlington Hotel lobby was Senator Aldrich, of Rhode Island. He said, 'I wish you could persuade your friend in the White House to quit his hunt for delegates. He is making a damned fool of himself.'" H. H. Kohlsaatt, *Saturday Evening Post*, August 19, 1922.

of the Governor. Nevertheless, the delegates, apparently anxious to maintain a united party, took good care not to betray too much favouritism by applause. Although the titular leader, slowly assisted to his seat among the Tioga delegates, excited little attention except as up-state friends occasionally greeted him, the entrance of the de facto leader aroused only sufficient recognition to indicate that the recently accepted boss had arrived. Into the motives for his unprecedented course the rank and file did not pretend to penetrate. They probably reflected the judgment of older politicians that it was rather an undignified partnership, which would put the next Legislature, if Republican, under his control whoever the Governor might be.

It was not an enthusiastic convention. The speech of Senator Depew failed to awaken the interest usually taken in his winged words, while discreetly measured applause followed the platform endorsement of Odell's administration and of Platt's fidelity, "who for more than a quarter of a century has stood firm in the battle for Republican supremacy." In choosing the four delegates-at-large it strained the harmony play to allow the Governor's name to precede that of the two Senators. Former Governor Black, whom Roosevelt designated to place him in nomination at Chicago, secured the fourth place. "Peace within the New York Republican ranks," said the *Philadelphia Press*, a Republican journal, "is purely nominal and superficial. Underneath the fires of hatred are burning fiercely." The delegates, however, displayed a real loyalty to Roosevelt, breaking into prolonged, triumphant cheers when the platform exalted the President's course respecting the Panama Canal.

Without apparent fear of the result, the Republican National Convention, meeting at Chicago on June 21, presented an undivided front.⁹ No contest existed over the platform

⁹ The convention was organised as follows: Elihu Root of New York and Joseph G. Cannon of Illinois, Speaker of the House of Representatives, became temporary and permanent chairmen. Former Governor Black of New York presented Roosevelt's name, seconded by Senator

or the candidate, the death of Senator Hanna on February 15 having silenced opposition to Roosevelt. There was some manœuvring over the vice-presidency. Senator Elkins of West Virginia was urgently pressed until he took the advice of Whitelaw Reid to remain in the Senate. Reid favoured Elihu Root and suggested it to the President, who had him in mind for secretary of state. Roosevelt, thinking it just as well to have the dominating "Uncle Joe" out of the House, pointed to Speaker Cannon. Finally the consent of Senator Fairbanks of Indiana settled his nomination. The convention, therefore, became simply a propagandising assembly, the many elaborate addresses setting forth the activities and self-control of the President. Elihu Root reviewed each step taken in the regulation of Trusts; the saving of the public domain for homesteads; the generous policy adopted in the government of Cuba; the control of local and provincial governments in the Philippines by officials elected by the Filipinos; the preservation of China's territory and administration entity; the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine; and the settlement of the Alaskan boundary dispute. In speaking of the achieved independence of Panama, he said: "The action of the United States at every step has been in accordance with the law of nations; consistent with the principles of justice and honour in discharge of the trust to build the canal we long since assumed, by denying the right of every other power to build it; dictated by a high and unselfish purpose for the common benefit of all mankind. That action was wise, considerate, prompt, vigorous and effective, and now the greatest of constructive nations stands ready and competent to begin and to accomplish the great enterprise which shall realise the dreams of past ages. Success in that enterprise greatly concerns the

Beverage of Indiana, George A. Knight of California, Harry Stillwell of Georgia, William O. Bradley of Kentucky, and Harry S. Cummings, a negro, of Maryland. Senator Dolliver of Iowa presented Fairbanks, seconded by Senator Depew of New York. On June 23 they were nominated by a unanimous viva voce vote of 994 delegates.

credit and honour of the American people and it is for them to say whether the building of the canal shall be in charge of the men who made its building possible, or of the weaklings whose incredulous objections would have postponed it for another generation."

Of the President, he said: "Honour, truth, courage, purity of life, domestic virtue, love of country, loyalty to high ideals—all these combined with active intelligence, with learning, with experience in affairs, with the conclusive proof of competency afforded by wise and conservative administration, by great things already done and great results already achieved—all these our President brings to the people. . . . He has taken the whole people into his confidence. Incapable of deception, he has put aside concealment. Frankly and without reserve he has told them what their government was doing, and the reasons. . . . He has meant every word he said, and the people have believed every word he said. No people can maintain free government who do not in their hearts value the qualities which have made the present President of the United States conspicuous among the men of his time as a type of noble manhood."

It was a very impressive scene—this man whom Roosevelt pronounced "the greatest man that has arisen on either side of the Atlantic in my lifetime," speaking in quiet, measured words, and the vast audience listening as to an oracle. Roosevelt's subsequent commendation is well worth reading. "I believe that history will say that, though we have had other great secretaries of state, we have had none greater than Elihu Root." His wonderful influence with Roosevelt was not a secret. He dared to revise the President's messages even though the latter reluctantly consented. In his presence, Roosevelt spoke of him as "the brutal friend to whom I pay the most attention." Roosevelt preferred him to Taft as the Presidential nominee in 1908, but because of his "corporation record," he feared defeat. "For thirty years or more," says Dr. Newton, "he has lived at the centre of affairs, without yielding to cyni-

cism. Time has mellowed his spirit, making him more magnanimous; but one misses in him a rare thing not easily defined. Manner, magnetism, wit? Call it rather the spiritual quality, the poetic touch, the haunting accent that moves the heart. Men admire Elihu Root; they loved John Hay.”¹⁰

The platform, stamping its approval upon every act of the Administration, declared that the President “brought to the great responsibilities sadly forced upon him a clear head, a brave heart, an earnest patriotism, and high ideals of public duty and public service. . . . Our foreign policy under his administration has not only been able, vigorous, and dignified, but in the highest degree successful. . . . His prompt and vigorous action in Panama, which we commend in the highest terms, not only secured to us the canal route, but avoided foreign complications which might have been of a very serious character. . . . His administration has been throughout vigorous and honourable, high-minded and patriotic, and we commend it without reservation to the considerate judgment of the American people.”

Notwithstanding the apparent confidence of Republicans to carry New York, a deeply rooted anxiety existed that the nominee for Governor should be a strong, popular man. As early as July Odell communicated with Joseph H. Choate, then ambassador to Great Britain, asking if he would accept the nomination. The State Committee, at its meeting on August 11, declared for Elihu Root. Like Choate, Root positively refused to be the candidate. Former Governor Black, whose speech presenting Roosevelt's name at Chicago had won the admiration of the whole party, again brought him into the limelight, the impression obtaining that his nomination would please the President. But he also declined. Former State Senator Stranahan of Oswego, collector of the Port of New York, who had long been a general favourite, received kindly mention. Lieutenant Governor Higgins had his friends, and Timothy O. Woodruff

¹⁰ *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1922.

found many supporters who believed his quality as solid as that of Higgins, if rather more picturesque.

Thus matters stood until a day or two preceding the Republican State convention, which assembled at Saratoga on September 14, when an open break again occurred between Platt and the Governor. The story is that after Elihu Root had positively declined, the Senator turned his support to Woodruff, receiving, he says, "the most unequivocal pledge from Odell that he had no candidate for governor and did not propose to take an active part in making up the State ticket."¹¹ Woodruff had not taken his candidacy seriously. While he appreciated the Senator's kindly feeling, he had learned from observation, if not by experience, that the Platt influence no longer won in the presence of the "Governor-Chairman," who had little liking for him. However, in view of Odell's pledge of neutrality and of former Governor Black's suggested aid in the interest of his own designs upon the seat of Depew in the Senate, Woodruff obtained the support of the Kings County delegation and went to work. On the eve of convention day, however, the Governor coolly informed the Senator that although he still had no candidate, he was against Woodruff. For a moment the Senator was silent. His lips quivered and his hands trembled, but his irresistible will-power remained active, as he shouted: "I am for him and I shall expect you to fulfil your pledge to keep hands off." There was no mistaking his attitude. Later in the evening Odell, calling again, suggested a conference to make up the ticket. "I suppose you will attend," added the Governor. "Not by a damned sight," retorted the Senator. "You gave me your word that you had no candidate for governor. Despite this you have been pledging delegates to Higgins. Under such circumstances I most emphatically decline to attend any conference for such a purpose."¹² It stiffened the quarrel that the Kings County delegation refused to withdraw its candidate. Meantime, Odell reported it would be Higgins, adding that

¹¹ *Autobiography*, p. 455.

¹² *Ibid.*

Woodruff, if he wished to do so, had a perfect right to submit his candidacy to the convention. Although the refusal of Platt to attend the conference startled no one more than Woodruff, he was not intimidated by the Governor's announcement, telling his friends to keep up the fight. To strengthen his chances the Kings County delegation adopted a resolution to be submitted to the convention, providing that on the ballot for governor the delegates be allowed to vote individually. It was after midnight before William H. Prendergast, the ready Brooklyn orator, finished a Woodruff presentation speech. The next morning Platt declared the situation unchanged; Odell thought conciliation talk unnecessary.

When the convention organised,¹³ a burst of cheers greeted Woodruff, the applause mingling with that accorded to Platt as he tottered, unassisted, down the aisle. The Governor and Lieutenant-Governor did not attend. The only feature of the session, however, came when the temporary chairman closed a model speech with a notable tribute to President Roosevelt, which aroused the delegates to an unusually high pitch of enthusiasm. It resembled the ovation given at the National Convention.

During the recess the serious thought of the delegates centred on the governorship. All wanted harmony rather than a factional fight, but on the surface an ugly contest seemed unavoidable. "It rests wholly with the Senator," said Woodruff, frankly and pathetically. "He has been my steadfast friend, and I cannot withdraw without greatly embarrassing him. Nor can I be nominated over Odell's opposition. I have hoped to show him that the sentiment is for me; but he has chosen to disregard the evidence. Since he put on the screws last night, leaders who volunteered their support, are now coming with the screw-marks

¹³ The convention organised as follows: Temporary and permanent chairmen, J. Sloat Fassett of Chemung and George Malby of St. Lawrence; chairman of Resolutions, John A. Sleicher of New York; Credentials, Edgar T. Brackett of Saratoga.

visible, saying that orders have gone forth to whip their delegations into line for Higgins."

To the knowing ones, however, the belief obtained that, personally popular as Woodruff was, the choice, if left to the delegates uninfluenced by the Governor or Senator, would be Higgins. He had no fads, no peculiarities of dress, did not pose or advertise. Disdaining display, he attended to his duties without fear. As president of the State Senate his capacity for getting at the facts and stating them quickly and lucidly, without assuming superiority, attracted attention, while his easy mastery of parliamentary law and the legislative rules contrasted favourably with Woodruff's careless competence. But just then he wore, to use Platt's expressive phrase, "the Odell tag," which partially eclipsed his popularity and made the "screws" necessary.

It is doubtful if Odell suspected the coherence and strength of the forces in sympathy with Platt, or realised the depths of the animosity toward himself. He was not destitute of sympathy, or of flexibility, or, perhaps, of insight, but an apparent harshness of manner, more manifest than in his earlier years, did not always please even those who supported him. It was noticeable that Fassett, in his speech as temporary chairman, did not mention the Governor's name, and that when Malby referred to him several county delegations remained silent. In their speeches of presentation Woodruff's friends did not conceal personal irritation. Prendergast flatly accused Odell of perfidy in promising an "open convention" and secretly packing it for Higgins. He likened it to the old rhyme of "the spider and the fly," adding "that the only open feature discernible is the trap-door through which certain candidates have been contumeliously hurried." He denounced the methods as subversive of party welfare and productive of party discontent. Then, with an apparent bloodless delight, he reminded the convention that in the year 1900 Woodruff's vote exceeded that of Odell, and charged that the only obstacle

now in Woodruff's way took the form of punishment because of his approval of the Senator rather than of the Governor. These strictures on Odell's management met with amazingly prompt applause. James F. Rogers of Broome, the Republican leader of the Assembly, in asking "what are we here for?" raised a tremendous answering shout "for Woodruff!" The uproar lasted several minutes. Even the mention of Platt's name by Arthur C. Wade, the one-armed orator of Chautauqua, who presented Lieutenant-Governor Higgins, stirred up a sudden gale of applause, many delegates and visitors springing to their feet. If the convention was shackled, these were moments when the clanking chains could not be heard.

As the Chair, at the conclusion of the presentation speeches, directed the roll to be called, Woodruff took the floor. "It is obvious," said he, "that the result is already settled and I do not desire to waste the time of the convention with a roll-call. You can keep me from a nomination, but you cannot drive me from the party. I am a Republican." After paying Lieutenant-Governor Higgins a deserved compliment, he withdrew his name as a candidate and committed the Kings County delegation to an earnest support of the ticket. The generous applause that followed showed no factional lines. His motion that the clerk cast one ballot for Frank Wayland Higgins for Governor added to the favourable impression. It was noticeable, however, that the Chair's announcement of Higgins' unanimous nomination provoked only conventional applause lasting less than forty seconds.

The remainder of the ticket found acceptance by acclamation, and without incident. The Governor's appointment of Edgar M. Cullen, a Democrat, to be chief judge of the Court of Appeals in succession to Alton B. Parker, resigned, foreshadowed the action of the convention.¹⁴

¹⁴ The ticket was as follows: Governor, Frank W. Higgins, of Cattaraugus; Lieutenant-Governor, M. Linn Bruce, New York County; Secretary of State, John F. O'Brien, Clinton County; Comptroller, Otto

The resolutions lauded the President; endorsed the national platform; approved increasing the effectiveness of the school system; proposed the further purchase of Adirondack forest land; praised the system of indirect taxation; and advocated the improvement of the canal and the further construction of good roads. Of the Governor, it said: "We commend the firm resolution, abiding common-sense, and strict integrity, unmoved by assaults from enemies or pleas from friends, with which Governor Odell has conducted the affairs of this State, and safeguarded with zealous care its vast and complicated interests."

Kelsey, Livingston County; State Treasurer, John Wallenmeier Jr., Erie County; Attorney-General, Julius M. Mayer, New York County; State Engineer and Surveyor, Henry A. Van Alstyne, Columbia County; Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, Edgar M. Cullen, Kings County; Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals, William E. Werner, Monroe County.

CHAPTER XXXVI

PARKER AND HERRICK

1904

At a Democratic dinner held in New York on January 4, a letter from Grover Cleveland expressed the belief that "the skies are bright with the promise of victory, if Democrats stoutly reaffirm old principles which the times demand." He characterised President Roosevelt's recognition of the independence of Panama as a disregard of "the territorial rights of another nation," which cast suspicion on "our national good faith." Richard Olney of Massachusetts, one of the speakers, said: "We have had a surfeit of sensations and spectacles, and we need a rest. We need it to recover our equilibrium." David B. Hill, after a long, drastic criticism of Roosevelt, declared "the people want a safe, consistent, level-headed, conservative administration."

A week later the Democratic National Committee, meeting in Washington, selected St. Louis, and July 6, as the place and date for their national convention. At that time several men distinguished in their respective States were mentioned as candidates for President, notably Richard Olney, formerly secretary of state during Cleveland's second term; Francis M. Cockrell, then a United States senator from Missouri; and Alton B. Parker of New York, chief judge of the Court of Appeals. Much was said, also, of William R. Hearst, representing a New York City district in Congress, the sole owner of eight daily newspapers in five cities, a champion of the cause of labour, and an unsparing opponent of corporate wealth.

To men with a vision, however, Parker seemed to be the favourite. This was especially true of the leaders in the South, for since the severance of their old-time relations

with the Eastern Democracy in 1894, defeat had followed defeat until the United States Senate was emptied of Northern Democrats, the House held a hopeless minority, and a Democratic Governor north of Mason and Dixon's line had become a rarity. A change of policy, therefore, seemed absolutely essential, and casting their eyes eastward they looked with favour upon the New Yorker. Although Parker excited little enthusiasm, was unknown personally to most of the leaders of his party at large, and had never been identified with any great aggressive political issue, he was far from being a stranger. In August, 1892, at the meeting of the National Bar Association at Denver, his name was associated with the Presidency. During the summer of 1893 he had delivered several addresses at non-partisan functions in the South, and not infrequently prominent Democrats from the West visited Albany for the purpose of meeting him. The magnet that attracted attention to him, however, was the fact that he more likely than any one else could carry the needed, if not the absolutely essential, State of New York. He had never identified himself with either wing of the party; his running qualities had been tested in 1897; and his conduct of the high office he had held for the past six years commended him as one certain to give a safe, conservative administration. The fact, however, that he had twice voted for William J. Bryan stood out as the basic rock of his prestige with the rank and file of the party. This inspired the belief that the "peerless leader," who had declined to become a candidate, would favour him.

In the meantime friends had not shown the indifference indicated by Parker himself, and in the autumn of 1903 half a dozen assembled at Rosemont, the Judge's home, and determined upon his candidacy.¹ They advised reticence—"an unnecessary caution," replied the Judge. Shortly after the adjoining States became good hunting-ground for dele-

¹ Among those present were Hill, Lamont, William F. Sheehan, who was again cultivating politics, Judge Morgan J. O'Brien and Judge Parker.

gates. It was apparent, however, that any show of lukewarmness in his own State would weaken his chance in other States, and to bring it quickly and earnestly into line David B. Hill was requested to take control of the campaign. The former Governor and the Chief Judge had long been intimate friends. In 1885, as chairman of the State Executive Committee, Parker managed Hill's campaign for Governor, and in the same year Hill appointed him to the Supreme Court. Upon the creation of the second division of the Court of Appeals in 1889, Hill again honoured him, an office which he held until the dissolution of the Court in 1893. Then he became a member of the General Term of the Supreme Court, first department. In 1897 he was elected chief judge of the Court of Appeals. Although almost continuously in office since his admission to the bar, he avoided becoming known as a politician. He declined a nomination for lieutenant-governor in 1885, and again in 1888. President Cleveland offered him the post of first assistant postmaster general, and in 1891 he refused Hill's persuasive appeal to enter the race for United States senator. What would have been his action in 1902 had Hill selected him for Governor with the view of making him a Presidential candidate in 1904 remains a mystery, although nothing mysterious clouds Hill's failure to select him. The defeat of Coler, however, bereft Hill of all hope of the Presidency, and he now came to Parker's aid with sincerity and enthusiasm. But Charles F. Murphy immediately emphasised his liability to err by declaring opposition to Parker.

After Mayor McClellan's election in the preceding November, Murphy became an inflated boss. He appropriated all the credit for the victory, claiming to be the discoverer of McClellan, and the creator of those disintegrating intrigues which separated Grout and Fornes from the Citizens' Union, divorced Patrick H. McCarren from Hugh McLaughlin, and caused the schism that plunged Jerome into his disrupting correspondence with Cutting. Now he proposed to control the State as well as Greater New York, and with

McClellan in mind as a "dark horse" for the Presidency, he attempted to defeat Parker by advocating Cleveland. He assumed that the schism between McCarren and McLaughlin was lasting; that McClellan's personal popularity in Congress would attract Southern leaders; and that up-state politicians hungered for his patronage. In his assumption of superiority he quarrelled with McCarren, a past master in political cunning, to whom he had promised the Brooklyn patronage, snubbed the loyal friends of McLaughlin, and disgusted his former up-state allies.

This enabled Hill to gain the support of McCarren and to secure the aid of Norman E. Mack of Buffalo, who accepted the candidacy of Parker because of his loyalty to Bryan. With their assistance, Hill obtained, to the great surprise of Murphy, the control of the State Committee, which fixed the State convention for the election of delegates-at-large to St. Louis on April 18. In a bitter contest at the primaries Hill also won control of the State convention. Once in the saddle he could be a diplomat or a boss. Nevertheless, he thought it safer to have the Tammany boss inside the fold than out, and to remove the latter's objection to an instructed delegation he began bargaining—offering him a delegate-at-large in place of August Belmont: perhaps the withdrawal of McCarren as chairman of the committee on resolutions; or a reorganisation of the State Committee. But Murphy was obstinate. Though he disliked Belmont and preferred another to McCarren, he declared he'd fight instructions to the finish, and to be ready for the contest he lined up Bourke Cockran, Thomas F. Grady, Charles E. Towne, Victor J. Dowling, and other star orators. The younger delegates, believing Tammany's sullen opposition helpful to Parker in the country at large, as it had been to Tilden and Cleveland, objected to any compromise; but experienced leaders of the Elliott Danforth and Frank Campbell type, who realised Tammany's helpfulness in accumulating a campaign fund and in securing votes in November, preferred to settle "if possible." So the night

preceding the convention wore away, creating the popular impression that Hill's management was necessary to secure New York's endorsement of its distinguished son. "It is a weight which must be gotten rid of," said the *New York Evening Post* (April 19), a devoted supporter of Parker. "It would be impossible to make the country believe that an honest Democracy is on the way with Hill in control."

But Murphy did not weaken, and the delegates, after hearing the cunning arguments of Tammany, instructed for Parker by a vote of 301 to 149. Of the minority votes Tammany cast 105. In spite of the ugly fight, however, the convention exhibited great enthusiasm. The absence of Hearst delegates encouraged the hope that the dramatic exhibition in the galleries did not reveal Bryan support, while George Raines' speech as temporary chairman, after its revision by Governor Hill, stirred the audience as he pictured the "blight" of the President's Panama policy and the "debasement" of Governor Odell's "sinking the governorship in his boss-ship." "It is not wonderful," he said, "that this ambitious chief, seeing the time is not auspicious for him as a candidate to submit his work to the people for approval, is unwilling to lose the fruit of his labours. He now unites the functions of control as Governor with the functions of control as party manager. There can be no rival. Time was when legislators were in doubt whether to consult Albany or Tioga. But now, how different! No longer will there be discord in the Grand Old Party."

The platform, shrewdly modelled after that of Tilden's in 1874, made no mention of the money question. Accompanying its endorsement of Parker as New York's candidate for President, it laid down very briefly a few general principles, such as a government of law; equal justice to all; no class legislation; no government partnership with protected monopolies; no military adventure; no violation of treaty pledges; no favouritism; no oppression; honesty in the public service; and a reasonable revision of the tariff.

Tammany's silence upon the adoption of these resolutions indicated its temper. Indeed, the withdrawal of Belmont as a delegate-at-large apparently avoided a threatened bolt.²

Omission of the money question provoked wide criticism. Presuming that Judge Parker approved the platform since his supporters controlled the convention, William J. Bryan, in a speech at Chicago on April 26, declared him "an unfit man to be nominated by any party that stands for honesty and fair dealing in politics." The New York *Evening Post* of the same date, charging the omission to "the malign effect of Hill's management," said: "Some things are known even if they are not shouted from the housetops. Is it to be supposed that endorsers of Parker, such as Mr. Cleveland, for example, or Messrs. Hornblower and Peckham, to say nothing of the Southern Democrats who are longing to rid their party of Bryanism, are in doubt about the Judge's views on the money question? It is not necessary for Judge Parker's friends to proclaim the fact that he is for no compromise whatever with Bryanism in all its forms. Bryan himself certified to that." In reply to the question, "If Parker and his supporters favour the gold standard why did the convention not say so?" it was said that State platforms are usually condensed and general; that the national platform is to be framed at the national convention, and when that is done Judge Parker will determine whether he will stand on it. Moreover, every intelligent politician understands that a large number of Democrats in the Southern and Middle-Western states, if not in New York, though favourable to Parker, would not consent to a public recantation of the money issue by the adoption of a gold plank, and thus humiliate "the peerless leader" of the last two campaigns and his many sympathisers. For this reason Hill preferred not to raise the issue in the April convention, lest it interfere in the country at large with the selection of Parker delegates. It was not an exhibition of sublime

² The delegates-at-large were: David B. Hill, Edward Murphy Jr., George Ehret (for Tammany), and James W. Ridgway.

courage, perhaps, but in the realm of political diplomacy it was not an impeachable offence.

Meantime party leaders manifested great disappointment that other States did not immediately fall into line with New York's action. It seemed as if the Parker candidacy had suffered a blight. Bryan spoke of his selection as "the nomination of an interrogation point"; declaring it "the first time in recent years, at least, that a man had been urged for so high a position on the ground that his opinions are unknown." The Atlanta (Georgia) *News* called him "the Sphinx." To emphasise its opposition, Tammany Hall sent its agents through the South, while the friends of Hearst, working industriously in every State, endeavoured to promote his candidacy by suggesting that Democracy is "going it blind" as to Parker. Indeed, not until the forceful leadership of Thomas Taggart of Indiana had carried his State for Parker, did the Democratic leaders fully realise that the Hearst candidacy, which they treated at first with derision, had blossomed into a most formidable foe. After this awakening there came a marked turning to Parker, not so much apparently because of his high character or his skilful political organisation, as of the intense anxiety to find a deliverer from the Bryan-Hearst combination, which time had fully disclosed. Soon after Indiana's action, therefore, the leading papers of the South declared Parker the one "available candidate for the party this year." Then Connecticut instructed for him; the Ohio convention (May 2) excluded the Hearst delegates; and the New Jersey delegation, though uninstructed, expressed its preference for him. Pennsylvania's subsequent approval (July 4) with the friendly feeling existing in the South, which had refused to support Hearst, made his nomination on the day the National Convention assembled at St. Louis (July 6) highly probable.

That the convention of 1904³ differed materially in its

³ Temporary chairman, John Sharp Williams, of Miss., minority leader of the House of Representatives; permanent chairman, Champ

character from the two preceding ones was evident when John Sharp Williams, the temporary chairman, declared "that the gold standard, established by the dogged persistency and indomitable will of Grover Cleveland in securing the repeal of the Republican silver-purchase law, is and is indefinitely to be the money standard of the country." Instantly the wildest enthusiasm swept through the great hall. Men mounted chairs and frantically waved hats and canes. A call for "three cheers for Grover Cleveland" brought a ringing response, while other similar calls came in rapid succession and were given with increasing energy. Before the day closed the remark became commonplace that rarely, if ever, had it happened that a public man, within a period of ten years, had seen a party of which he had lost control, acknowledge that he was right and it was wrong.

Further evidence of this change of sentiment appeared in the settlement of several Hearst contests for seats reported from Illinois. William J. Bryan, in a long and impassioned speech, argued the case for the contestants, and although the decision was of no practical help to Parker, since the Illinois State Convention had instructed for Hearst, the delegates defeated the free-silver advocate by a vote of 647 to 299. It clearly indicated that more than two-thirds of the convention was against Bryan.

Yet, in spite of this reaction, the Committee on Resolutions, composed of the most prominent men of the party,⁴ had a long struggle over a money plank. At first it accepted a paragraph declaring that since the production of gold had

Clark, of Mo., also member of the House. New York's assignments: Chairman of Delegation, Edward Murphy Jr.; Resolutions, David B. Hill; Rules, Thomas F. Grady; Credentials, James W. Ridgway; member of National Committee, Norman E. Mack.

⁴ Besides David B. Hill and William J. Bryan, the membership included U. S. Senators Daniels of Va. (chairman); Carmack of Tennessee, Bailey of Texas, Dubois of Idaho, Newlands of Nevada, Tillman of S. C.; also ex-Senators Davis of W. Va., and Pettigrew of South Dakota, and John S. Williams of Miss.

enormously increased in recent years, the question of the monetary standard had ceased to be a political issue. To this declaration Bryan objected so stoutly that the subject was finally committed to a sub-committee composed of Williams, Bryan, and Hill. Williams thought the existing monetary standard, having ceased to be a political issue, had no place in a platform which should present only living issues. Bryan, who had cunningly introduced for trading purposes a resolution favouring an income tax, demanded a reaffirmation of the free-silver doctrine. Hill insisted upon the retention of the plank that the recent production of gold had removed the money issue from the field of political contention. "In other words," said Bryan, somewhat sharply, "you want a gold plank to go with your gold candidate whom you are forcing upon the country." To which Hill replied, disingenuously, that he knew nothing of Parker's monetary views. "Do you mean to say," demanded the Nebraskan, "that you don't know Judge Parker's views?" "I mean to say just that," retorted Hill. "You have no knowledge on that subject?" "None." "Have never asked him?" "I have never sought to secure an expression of his views," replied the former Governor, "and he has never sought to convey them to me. I only know that he is a Democrat, a high-minded, patriotic citizen, who can be trusted implicitly on this as upon other matters of public policy. Ten days ago I asked him about the character of the platform, and he said: 'I am perfectly willing to leave that to the wisdom of the Democratic party.'" Bryan, still wrought up to high tension, inquired why a gold plank had not been incorporated in the New York platform? Hill shivered, then dodged, saying that the matter had first been discussed at the meeting of the delegation about ten days before, and that the declaration he now desired was insisted upon by other members of the party than himself.

Bryan replied that such a plank would alienate many thousand voters who never suspected that the candidacy of

Parker meant an acceptance of the gold standard. An income-tax would strengthen the party, he added, while "a gold standard" or "the existing standard," however phrased, meant defeat. Williams repeated that silence as to standards meant that the money issue was dead. To refer to it in any way would be hazardous. Hill thought "a gold plank of far greater importance than the income-tax," and insisted that each be taken up separately with the full committee and considered on their merits. The Nebraskan then gave notice that if the committee rejected the income-tax and approved the money plank, he should make a minority report and carry the contest to the floor. Although the convention's action in the Illinois contest had clearly indicated its disposition to halt Bryan's domination, Hill feared that if forced to take the floor, Bryan's speech, followed by the applause of the galleries which he controlled, and by the debate it must inevitably provoke, might create a spasmodic sentiment likely to defeat Parker's nomination. He recognised, also, that the vital plank, if omitted, would leave his candidate dangling in the air, and Bryan at liberty to shout from the housetops that his financial views had not been condemned by his party. It was an irksome position. Although he had been in the committee room for sixteen hours, vainly exhausting all the arts of a resourceful politician, he recognised that sentiment clearly favoured the omission of a monetary plank, and, accustomed as he was to compromises, he finally accepted Bryan's proposition to drop both the income-tax and the gold standard, "with the privilege of voting for the gold standard in the full committee." "A real man in his clothes," said the *Evening Post*, "would have stood until doomsday before yielding to the impudent and destructive demands of the bold and fertile Robespierre of the party."

The full committee adopted the sub-committee's report by a vote of 35 to 15, the latter coming from the East and South. As Hill left the room, he said: "I preferred to see an expression on the finances, but the majority thought

otherwise." Asked if Parker would stand on the platform as drawn, he said: "I do not see why not. I am said to be his friend, and I am satisfied." Overhearing this remark, one of the many "dissatisfied" delegates remarked: "If Judge Parker is not made of sterner stuff than the former Senator, his campaign will end before it begins."

The presentation of the platform received slight attention. Its previous publication made it familiar, and the Hill-Bryan compromise robbed it of interest. Yet the document, drawn for the most part by John Sharp Williams, had the ring of a master mind. It emphasised "local self-government" as the distinctive feature of the American system, with warnings against usurpation by the President. It demanded retrenchment in government expenditure; a tariff that did not hide monopoly; a civil service honestly and impartially enforced; justice to the Filipinos, with freedom to work out their own destiny; a strict enforcement of existing civil and criminal statutes against Trusts; the enlargement of the Interstate Commerce Commission's powers that the public might get prompt and adequate relief from transportation abuses; the speedy and economical construction of the Panama Canal; the immediate admission as States of Oklahoma, Arizona, and New Mexico, and territorial governments for Alaska and Porto Rico; the extermination of polygamy within the jurisdiction of the United States; liberal trade relations with Canada; the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine; and generous pensions for soldiers and sailors "who defended with their lives the Constitution."

It denounced President Roosevelt as "spasmodic, erratic, sensational, spectacular, and arbitrary"—summoning Congress into hasty and futile session; making war without the authority of Congress; violating plain statutes as well as plain treaty obligations; forcing strained and unnatural constructions upon statutes; usurping judicial interpretation and substituting Congressional enactment; withdrawing from Congress its customary duties of investigation;

conducting secret investigations of his own; and keeping in power superior officers under whose administration crimes had been committed. It also condemned "the Bourbon-like selfish and narrow spirit of the recent Republican convention at Chicago, which sought to kindle anew the embers of racial and sectional strife."

The presentation of candidates for President followed the perfunctory adoption of the platform, the six nominating and eight seconding speeches consuming the entire night.⁵ Yet the great audience remained. It was noticeable that in the half-hour demonstration following Martin W. Littleton's felicitous address presenting Judge Parker's name, Tammany took no part. The Hearst display, though small, looked more imposing because an alternate accompanied each delegate, all bearing aloft a portrait of their candidate. The real heart tribute, and most stirring scene of the session, however, followed Champ Clark's delightful, almost pathetic presentation of Senator Cockrell. Instantly the great audience sprang to its feet, and for half an hour continued to cheer and to wave the little flags which "loving friends," it was said, had provided.

That Senator Cockrell deserved such a tribute was common knowledge. President Roosevelt belonged among his admirers. "I have never anywhere," he said, "met a finer, more faithful, more disinterested and more loyal public servant than Senator Cockrell. Doubtless there were points on which I seemed to him to be extreme and radical; but eventually when he found that our motives and beliefs were the same, he did all in his power to help any movement that was for the interest of our people as a whole."⁶ It was because of Cockrell's known lovable personality, indicated anew by the great ovation, that Bryan, an hour later, used

⁵ The following candidates were placed in nomination: Alton B. Parker, New York; George Gray, Delaware; William R. Hearst, New York; Richard Olney, Massachusetts; Edward C. Wall, Wisconsin; Francis M. Cockrell, Missouri.

⁶ *Autobiography*, p. 384.

his name in an effort to break Parker's following: "As a private citizen to-day," said Bryan, "I am more interested in Democratic success than when I was a candidate. The reasons that make the election of the Democratic candidate desirable are stronger in 1904 than they were in 1896 or in 1900." Then, quoting from the speech of Governor Black in presenting the name of President Roosevelt at Chicago,⁷ he continued: "This eulogising the doctrine of brute force gives denial to the hopes of the race. And this President, a candidate for re-election, is presented as the embodiment of that ideal, the granite and the iron, to represent the new idea of militarism. If this is the doctrine our nation is to stand for, it is retrogression, not progression; it is the lowering of the ideals of the nation; it is the turning backward to the age of force. More than that, it is a challenge to the Christian civilisation of the world, and nothing less. Will you of New York, will you of the South, present a graver indictment against President Roosevelt than that? I do not ask what is the character of the man. He may be exemplary in every way, but if the President shares the idea of the man who sponsored him at Chicago that wars must settle the destinies of nations; that peace is but a dream; that women may pray for it, that men may prophesy about it; that all these talks of orderly tribunals are but empty sounds; if he believes these things he is a dangerous man for our country and the world. I believe he ought to be defeated, and if the Democratic party does what it ought to do, I believe he will be defeated.

"But, my friends, if we are to have some other god besides this war god, what kind of a god is it to be? Must we choose between a god of war and a god of gold? Is there no choice between them? If there is anything more hateful than

⁷ "You may talk of orderly tribunals and learned referees; you may sing in your schools the gentle praises of the quiet life; you may strike from books the last note of every martial anthem; and yet out in the smoke and thunder will always be the tramp of horses, and the silent, rigid, upturned faces."

militarism it is plutocracy, and I insist that the Democratic party shall not be compelled to choose between militarism on one side and plutocracy on the other. We now have a platform upon which we can all stand; now give us a candidate for whom we can all vote. Nebraska asks nothing except to fight the battles of Democracy under the leadership of William R. Hearst, or former Governor Pattison of Pennsylvania, or the beloved Senator of Missouri, whose nomination I now second with all my heart."

It was a daring move. Choosing the last opportunity to speak, he sought, by a burst of eloquence that recalled his cross of gold speech in 1896, to unite the anti-Parker vote on Cockrell, the apparent favourite of the convention. The great audience went wild. The band played, the flags reappeared and the procession marched. Indeed, everything spectacular had been arranged, and the demonstration in no wise proved a disappointment. The choice between "a god of war and a god of gold" had caught the crowd at a new angle, and for a moment the result of the plot seemed serious. But most of the delegates sat silent and unmoved, and half an hour later, on the completion of the roll-call at 5 o'clock in the morning (Saturday, July 9), Parker had 658 votes—within nine of the needed two-thirds. Rapid changes quickly supplied them, and on motion of Governor Dockery of Missouri the nomination became unanimous.⁸

⁸ The votes were recorded as follows: Parker, 658; Hearst, 204; Cockrell, 42; Olney, 38; Wall, 27; Gray, 8; scattering, 20. Parker's votes by States: Alabama, 22; Arkansas, 12; Connecticut, 14; Colorado, 4; Florida, 6; Georgia, 26; Indiana, 30; Kansas, 7; Kentucky, 26; Louisiana, 18; Maine, 7; Maryland, 16; Michigan, 28; Minnesota, 9; Mississippi, 20; Montana, 6; New Hampshire, 8; New Jersey, 24; New York, 78; North Carolina, 24; South Carolina, 18; Ohio, 46; Oregon, 4; Pennsylvania, 68; Tennessee, 24; Texas, 36; Utah, 6; Vermont, 6; Virginia, 24; West Virginia, 10; Alaska, 6; Indian Territory, 5; Oklahoma, 2; Porto Rico, 2. Hearst's votes: Cal., 20; Col., 5; Idaho, 6; Illinois, 54; Iowa, 26; Kansas, 10; Maine, 1; Minn., 9; Nebraska, 4; Nevada, 6; Oregon, 2; R. I., 6; South Dakota, 8; Washington, 10; W. Virginia, 2; Wyoming, 6; Arizona, 6; Indian Territory, 1; New Mexico, 6; Hawaii, 6; Oklahoma, 2; Porto Rico, 4.

The convention then recessed until half-past two o'clock in the afternoon.

When Judge Parker learned of his nomination he wired William F. Sheehan during the forenoon as follows: "I regard the gold standard as firmly and irretrievably established, and shall act accordingly if the action of the convention to-day shall be ratified by the people. As the platform is silent upon the subject my views should be made known to the convention, and if it is proved to be unsatisfactory to the majority I request you to decline the nomination for me at once, so that another may be nominated before adjournment." This message came like a bomb. Those to whom it was first disclosed thought it incredible and refused to accept its genuineness until verified. When shown to Hill, he demanded its suppression as Parker anticipated. For that reason he sent it to Sheehan. Indeed, it caused such consternation among the leaders that their surprise quickly turned to resentment, compelling the convention to recess until evening. They could not understand now the tongueless and opinionless candidate, who, according to Hill, was "willing to leave the platform to the wisdom of the Democratic party," had suddenly appeared with views of his own and with the courage of Cleveland to express them, regardless of the decree of his party. The Southern leaders, feeling responsible for his nomination, were especially irritated. They thought his silence, coupled with Hill's assurances, a foxy play to secure the nomination, and regarded his eleventh hour utterance equivalent to a trap from which there seemed no way of escape. John Sharp Williams reflected this spirit in a speech preceding the presentation of his astutely drawn reply: "The platform adopted by this convention," it read, "is silent on the question of the monetary standard because it is not regarded by us as a possible issue in this campaign, and only campaign issues were mentioned in the platform. Therefore there is nothing in the views expressed by you in the telegram just received, which would preclude a man enter-

taining them from accepting a nomination on said platform."

This reply precipitated an ugly discussion. Senator Tillman uncorked his wrath, characterising Hill's methods as "peanut politics," and challenging his statement that he had never talked finance with Parker. Bryan was even more cantankerous. Looking about the hall he inquired why Hill was not present; exploited their conversation in the committee room; declared the Williams reply a declaration for the gold standard; and suggested a possible bolt. Although a suspicion of jugglery obtained among many delegates, the great majority maintained that the motive was a high sense of honour, showing an unwillingness that his opinions should be misunderstood. Senator Daniels of Virginia, chairman of the committee on resolutions, who had tired of Bryan's course in the committee room, thought there was "a scratchiness even in his geniality." Indeed, the notable decline in Bryan's influence had astonished even his friends, who were now to witness a further evidence of it, the convention adopting the reply by a vote of 785 to 190. Yet it could not be disguised that Parker's message had chilled the ardour of the South, while the silver-men of the West wagged their heads and departed full of the spirit of revolt.

Nor did the nomination for Vice President of Henry G. Davis of West Virginia, formerly United States senator, then eighty-one years of age, add enthusiasm. His age overshadowed his honourable career. But he had great riches. Moreover, West Virginia was a doubtful State.

The Parker telegram at once provoked an acrid controversy throughout the country. Democratic and many Independent journals declared it revealed a figure of heroic proportions. "Such clear and shining courage was never before seen in a Presidential candidate," said the *New York Evening Post* (July 11). "It cannot be said, as it would have been said but for this incident," wrote Watterson of the *Courier-Journal*, "that our nominee is Hill's man or any man's

man." On the other hand, the Republican press thought it a shrewd game of politics. "By maintaining his own silence and permitting his accredited agents to create an erroneous impression of perfect docility on his part," said the New York *Tribune* (July 11), "he secured an otherwise improbable, if not impossible, nomination; then made a spirited offer of withdrawal which was virtually certain to be declined, and thus gained for himself an advantage of position which he could not do without, but which the convention never intended him to have."

This controversy intensified the feeling that Hill was a handicap to Parker. It did not need the prodding of the opposition press to create the impression that the director of a successful campaign for a Presidential nomination held a position of strategic strength, and that however intelligent, forceful, and independent Parker might be, the public would not drop the idea that he was "Hill's man." Other disturbing conditions existed. It had long been apparent that Hill's prominence was distasteful to the old Cleveland following as well as to Tammany and to Senator Gorman of Maryland, who made no concealment of their dislike. It was known, too, that Western Democrats, resenting his defeat of an income tax plank, displayed a disquieting apathy. Parker's declared purpose in his letter of acceptance not to be a candidate in 1908, made the situation even more alarming, since it would give Hill, a master-organiser, an opportunity at the end of four years to control the Parker organisation to gratify his own ambition.

It is likely Hill himself realised this handicap. Moreover, he had discovered that Parker not only had a mind of his own, but that he distrusted him, otherwise the famous "gold telegram," to which they never afterwards referred, would not have gone to Sheehan. Hill knew, too, that Parker, if elected, would choose advisers in whom he had implicit confidence. He must have surmised, also, that his deliberate preference for Coler for Governor in 1902, in order to further his own Presidential designs in 1904, did

not add to Parker's gratitude for his present support, since Coler's defeat had destroyed any chance he might otherwise have had. At all events, Hill saw nothing ahead that would benefit him, and to avoid embarrassing snubs in the future, he suddenly announced (August 28) that, win or lose, this campaign would close his career in politics. In the event of party success in November, he added, he would accept no office either Federal or State, as he desired to give his entire time to his profession. It was a laudable desire. A comprehensive knowledge of the law, painstaking accuracy, and a consummate skill in forensic proceedings, classed him among distinguished lawyers. He had twice been elected president of the State Bar Association, and after his retirement from the United States Senate (1897) devoted his talents to interesting and important litigation in the higher courts. To his personal friends, however, who appreciated his intense enjoyment of political leadership, the announcement of his retirement came as a jest, while the independent press and others deeply devoted to Parker's success, regarded it, whether sincere or not, as the best contribution he could then make to the welfare of his party.

Nevertheless, Hill did not hesitate to exercise his usual control over the State convention about to assemble at Saratoga. He could not tolerate Judge Cullen, the appointee of Governor Odell in place of Chief Judge Parker, resigned, whom the Republicans, in the interest of a non-partisan judiciary, had nominated. Although a Democrat, Cullen had fearlessly decided against "the steal of a Dutchess County senator," and Hill refused to forgive him. He also became deeply interested in the selection of a candidate for Governor. The long list of "mentioned" included well-known men from every section of the State, among them John B. Stanchfield of Elmira; Daniel N. Lockwood of Buffalo; Edward M. Grout, comptroller of Greater New York; Daniel Lamont, the friend and cabinet adviser of President Cleveland; Edward M. Shepard of Brooklyn; Charles H. Goodyear of Buffalo, known well for

his civic activities and as a partner in the Cleveland law firm; and William Travers Jerome, district attorney of New York County. Although the party press assumed to be satisfied with Parker's letter of acceptance and occasional speeches addressed to visiting delegations at Esopus, his home on the Hudson, the *New York World* thought the hour had come when his habit of judicial reserve should be supplemented by an aggressive speaker, ready in retort, in quickness of wit, and in superb audacity. Of the candidates suggested for Governor none lacked the rhetoric of sturdy Democratic orators; but the ability of Jerome and Shepard as campaigners made them especially attractive. "Imagine Jerome," said a Hoffman House manager, "whirling through the State, exposing canal frauds, and denouncing Odell's unprecedented course of uniting in himself the Governorship and the State committeeship." It was suggested that Shepard's influence among the sore and resentful Brooklyn Republicans who denounced Odell's treatment of Woodruff as "shameful," would restore their instinct of fight. Even Grout's candidacy, which Robert H. McCarren persistently urged, won favour because of his energy and aggressive temper as a speaker.

But objection to these men quickly took root. Charles F. Murphy hated McCarren and despised Grout. Nor had the latter's course in the last municipal contest endeared him to the lovers of good government. A conscientious leader, they said, would never have shaken himself free from his pledge to the Citizens' Union or consented to enter the Tammany web. As to Jerome, the leaders generally declared him too difficult a man to handle in a campaign. "If we let him loose on the stump," said Herman Ridder of the *Staats-Zeitung*, "he would probably sail into Hill, Murphy and McCarren, and might even whack Judge Parker. Every Democratic leader in the State would have nervous prostration before the end of the campaign." Hill did not forget that Jerome, when supporting the Citizens' Union ticket in 1901, had savagely attacked Platt, then one of Low's strong-

est allies. Nor did Jerome, after an interview with Hill respecting the governorship, fail to let it be known that, if nominated, it must be in an open convention, and not of "the trap-door kind patented by Odell." He would not wear a "Hill tag."

Hill's activity in the selection of a candidate aroused suspicion. His lack of sympathy with proposed candidates acceptable to those deeply interested in Parker's success early became noticeable. William B. Hornblower had consented to become the temporary chairman of the convention. The great lawyer was in no sense a politician or place hunter; he had nothing to conceal or to pretend; but his devotion to Parker made him eager to lend a hand, and the candour, the sense of simplicity, and the marvellous alertness of mind displayed in his opening speech so completely captivated the Tammany boss that he proposed his nomination for Governor. Hill, however, who opposed Jerome and Shepard, and gave little heed to the claims of Goodyear, quickly chilled Murphy's attitude toward Hornblower, to whose confirmation as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States he had successfully objected nine years before. Indeed, on the afternoon of the day the convention opened no one knew who would head the ticket.⁹ Later in the evening the contest had narrowed to Grout, Shepard and Stanchfield. At midnight Stanchfield's supporters, to the discomfiture of Hill, shifted to Grout, while delegations from Erie, Onondaga, and other up-state counties stiffened Murphy's opposition to Grout. Thus the situation became exasperating. Even Grout's promise to resign as comptroller as soon as nominated did not appease Murphy. With equal tenacity McCarren clung to Grout. The friends of Shepard believed him the strongest and

⁹ The convention organised as follows: Temporary Chairman, William B. Hornblower, New York; Permanent Chairman, Duncan C. Lee, Tompkins Co.; Chairman Committee on Resolutions, George Raines, Monroe Co. No contesting delegations appearing, a committee on credentials was omitted.

most available candidate to unite the factions, to whom neither Murphy nor his up-state allies objected. Yet because of McCarren's pronounced dislike, the half-dozen ticket makers, in the early morning hours, began considering D. Cady Herrick of Albany, then a judge of the appellate division of the Supreme Court. The relations between Herrick and Hill had varied. In 1888 he thought it inadvisable for Hill to run for governor because it gave the liquor interests an excellent opportunity for trading to Cleveland's injury; but after the latter's defeat he accepted Hill's leadership, although maintaining control of the Albany County organisation. To get rid of him the Hill faction offered to aid his candidacy for the Supreme Court if he would resign as State committeeman. This he refused to do. After his election and subsequent promotion to the appellate division he wrote the prevailing opinion, granting an order to show cause why the State Canvassing Board, for its action in the Dutchess County returns, should not be punished for contempt. To add to Hill's animosity, he preferred Cleveland in 1892. But as time passed, and the triumvirate of Croker, Edward Murphy and Anthony H. Brady forced Hill to run for governor in 1894, the latter became more friendly with Herrick, who had no relations with the "money changers." His hands were as clean and his courage as abiding as Cleveland's. Nor was one ever compelled to wonder what was his real opinion. His conversation expressed decided convictions, but he faced his critics without hauteur. In 1896 Hill accepted his advice to remain silent in the canvass of that year, and ever after they had been personal friends if not open political allies. Yet there were objections to his candidacy for governor. To Patrick E. McCabe, then chairman of the Albany County Committee, he was anathema. A stronger objection was the fact that, unlike Parker, he did not lay aside his political activities when he assumed his judicial duties. "It is notorious," said the *New York World* (September 23), "that after becoming a justice of the Supreme Court he continued

to be the political boss of Albany, and until the adoption of the ballot system the methods of the Albany machine, under his more or less direct leadership, was alleged to be tyrannical and corrupt. Yet his bitterest enemy would not credit a charge of venality against him; nor would his warmest friend deny that he had damaged the reputation of the judiciary by his participation in practical politics. The long association of such a fine and scholarly mind with low and disreputable ward politicians has puzzled many lawyers, who have praised his work on the bench."

That phase of Herrick's life did not puzzle Hill, who had worked with similar company. Nor did his stubborn independence disturb him. Indeed, it seemed that Hill had Herrick in mind from the first, and in the confusion, made more hopeless because of the lateness of the hour, he promptly pronounced for him and volunteered to make the nominating speech. Then Sheehan called Parker over the telephone, who readily approved, suggesting that his sound-money views had never been questioned. There remained Hill's objection to Judge Cullen. The latter's loyalty, however, expressed in his message that if not named by the Democratic convention he would not accept the Republican nomination, softened Hill into an approval of the non-partisan arrangement of Cullen and Werner.

These things being accomplished, the small company hastened to the convention, where the tired delegates, greatly relieved by the agreement upon Herrick, vociferously cheered the entrance of David B. Hill, followed by Charles F. Murphy, Bourke Cockran, Patrick H. McCarren, and Shepard's friend, L. D. Stapleton of Brooklyn. After the adoption of the platform,¹⁰ the entire audience sprang

¹⁰ The resolutions endorsed the St. Louis platform and candidates, favoured home rule, and eulogised Judge Herrick. Of Governor Odell it said: "For the first time in its history the Empire State has a Governor, whose personal integrity rests under widespread suspicion. He had surrounded himself by high State officials and advisers, under whose malign influence the public revenues of the State are largely diverted to private profit."

to its feet with long continued cheering, as the former Governor, in response to the call for nominations, slowly made his way to the stage. It was the homage paid to a vanished solicitude "lest the party," as Bourke Cockran happily expressed it, "might emphasise its differences within itself rather than with its Republican adversaries." Hill's speech, neither sensational, eulogistic, nor the work of a phrase-monger, sketched Judge Herrick's career in a simple yet effective way, telling of things already known and of sacrifices soon to come; adding, in pathetic tones: "This is a year when sacrifices are necessary." Likening Herrick to Parker, he said: "He has wronged no man; he has held the scales of justice even." His declaration, however, that the convention marked the close of all conflicts in the ranks of the party, and that henceforth, united and harmonious, it "would fight only the common enemy," brought the audience for the third time to its feet.

Herrick's nomination, made by acclamation, turned the convention into a pandemonium. There seemed to be no regrets, no disappointments, no resentments, and with a vision of victory no less assuring than that which the gold standard telegram created, the delegates finished their work without a divided vote.¹¹ A hearty endorsement of Judge Herrick from former President Cleveland added to the joy. "There can be no doubt," said he, "of his rugged honesty, great ability, and unyielding devotion to Democratic principles."

Yet a cloud shadow swiftly covered the rosy vision. The New York *Evening Post* (September 21) although earnestly desiring the election of Parker, refused to support Herrick. "Are we to attack Odellism with a candidate adept in all

¹¹ The ticket was as follows: Governor, D. Cady Herrick, Albany; Lt.-Governor, Francis Burton Harrison, New York; Sec. of State, John Pallace, Jr., Rochester; Comptroller, George Hall, Ogdensburg; State Treas., A. A. McLean, Newburgh; Atty.-Gen., John Cunneen, Buffalo; State Engineer and Surveyor, F. H. Stryker, Utica; Chief Justice Court of Appeals, Edgar M. Cullen, Brooklyn; Associate Justice, Court of Appeals, William E. Werner, Rochester.

the disreputable arts of Democratic politics? It will be said that Herrick was a useful organiser for Mr. Cleveland. So was the notorious Raisin of Baltimore; but that did not fit him to be Governor. . . . In passing by Jerome and Shepard to nominate Herrick, the Democratic convention deliberately threw away its great opportunity." The *New York Sun*, which had refused to support Higgins because of his association with Odell, called Herrick "a desperate political operator," and the *New York Times*, though it tolerated him, characterised his activity in politics while on the bench as an "impropriety" and "a scandal." "Any attempt to draw the independent voters to his support," said the *Springfield (Mass.) Republican*, "appears hopeless."

CHAPTER XXXVII

PARKER'S DEFEAT

1904

IN the absence of a paramount issue, the campaign of 1904 was largely confined to a discussion of the sins of Republicans, the timidity of Democrats respecting the gold standard, and the personality of the leading candidates. "As I see it there cannot be the least doubt," wrote former President Cleveland, "that in the pending political campaign the personal characteristics of the candidates nominated for the Presidency will occupy to an unusual extent the thought of those who will, by their votes, determine the contest. It is not difficult to account for this condition. During the last three years the Presidential office has been administered in such a manner as to challenge the anxious reflection of the millions of conservative and patriotic voters who neither mistake sensationalism for the emphasis of lofty Americanism, nor their conception of duty for blind obedience to party leadership." Then he carefully summed up Judge Parker's "adherence to convictions," "unique courage," "unequivocal independence," "deliberation in reaching conclusions," and "inherent judicial conservatism," which "should make it thoroughly understood that those who love Presidential pyro-technics must look elsewhere."¹

The New York *Times* said: "Judge Parker's letter of acceptance is the contribution of a strong man, diametrically the opposite of President Roosevelt's loud, insistent, blustering arrogation of all wisdom and virtue." The hostile attitude of the independent press toward President Roosevelt greatly encouraged the Democrats. "Practically all

¹ *McClure's Magazine*, November, 1904.

the metropolitan newspapers of largest circulation were against me," he said. "In New York City fifteen out of every sixteen copies of papers issued were hostile to me." Many Democratic orators revelled in scandalous speech. In his Elmira address, Hill spoke of the President as "a fraud"; and Watterson of the *Courier Journal*, garbling a line from Byron, called him "as sweet a gentleman as ever scuttled a ship or cut a throat." To its credit the *Evening Post*, friendly to Parker, sharply rebuked such ribaldry. "This wholesale swashbuckling attack may have a place in the universe," it said (September 8), "but in this community the Wattersonian style accomplishes less than nothing." The independent press, less violent, though perhaps no less severe, endeavored to convince the public that however good his intentions, Roosevelt lacked that profound respect for law, that sobriety in judgment, and that restraint in action, which a President should possess.

For the same purpose a number of the most prominent lawyers of Greater New York organised the Parker Constitutional Club, James C. Carter being its president, Wheeler H. Peckham, John E. Parsons, Joseph Caroque and John G. Carlisle its vice-presidents, William Church Osborne its secretary, and William E. Curtis its treasurer. Upon its executive committee were William B. Hornblower, Francis L. Stetson, John G. Milburn, Howard Taylor, and James M. Gerard. It proposed to show the radical departure Roosevelt had made in a number of executive actions, and the extreme danger of entrusting power to an executive of his temperament. "The greatest changes in the fabric of government," it said, "often come imperceptibly, but Roosevelt's arbitrary usurping of legislative functions must impress any thinking person. No President has gone to the extreme limits in time of peace in massing enormous power in his own hands, and one need not be gifted with prophetic insight to foresee the whole train of alarming circumstances that can easily ensue from a persistent course of this nature. The gravity of his course lies not only

in the present effect, but in the precedents he has established. As long ago as 1803 the Supreme Court held that it had no power to order what the Chief Executive should or should not do. Hence the urgent necessity of having as President a man of safe tendencies. If he is of a rampant nature, indifferent to the wisdom of holding wise Constitutional limitations, he will abuse the powers of his office by jumping to excesses. This is precisely what President Roosevelt has done. If he will do this as an accidental President, what will he not do if elected? The mandate of the people he will accept as a vindication of his methods and a demand to continue them. This is the vital issue."

This critique called forth an historical parallel which amused Republicans as much as it disturbed Parker's political leaders. "Following President Buchanan," said the *Tribune* (October 13), "came a man whom the Democrats called a lawless despot as earnestly and no doubt as conscientiously as they now call President Roosevelt one. He, too, thought he had power to 'do' things, instead of discovering constitutional bugbears to excuse indecision. . . . It sometimes seems as if President Roosevelt was subjected to an undue share of misrepresentation, but when we think of President Lincoln's suffering from the same sort of criticism we realise that he has no right to expect anything else. Even the cartoonists, with their stock of 'store teeth' and bloodthirsty grins, have not approached Lincoln, the gorilla. While Lincoln was at work accomplishing the things the nation wanted, the Democratic Constitutional clubs were proving to their own satisfaction that he was violating the Constitution and modifying the principles of this nation just as Constitutional clubs are saying of Theodore Roosevelt now. They had a great convention at Chicago in 1864, and declared that under Lincoln 'the Constitution itself had been disregarded in every part, and public liberty and private right alike trodden down and the material prosperity of the country essentially impaired'; and they strongly denounced 'the administrative

usurpations of extraordinary and dangerous powers not granted by the Constitution.' All this is exceedingly like what we hear to-day. With a few changes of names, dates and incidents, the Democratic campaign documents of 1864 could be used by Judge Parker to-day. President Roosevelt seems to stand before the people under just the same indictments for 'lawlessness,' 'usurpation,' 'violation of the Constitution,' and 'disposition to undermine the fundamental principles of our republic and convert it into a despotism,' which were brought against President Lincoln."

Republicans were not slow in their thrusts at Parker. The reception of his "gold telegram" had already indicated a perfect willingness to wage the campaign on the personality of the leading candidates. The advent of that very timely telegram showed his character to better advantage than anything else he could have said or done, and an effort to deprive him of the full credit having withered in the presence of the truth,² they sought to minimise his ability. Their ready treatment of his letter of acceptance furnished further proof of it. In a leading editorial the *Tribune* pounced upon it like a hawk, declaring that he did not dare to say a word on the gold standard be-

² After the convention Judge Parker wrote as follows: "I supposed there was no longer any one who really believed in 16 to 1, and I expected no controversy on the subject; but the account of the bitter contest in the platform committee, coupled with the assertion that this contest made the money standard an issue again, seemed to me to require that my views on that subject should be made known to the convention. My neighbours and all my associates knew my views, but the convention had not been told, so it was reported. Hence, I promptly decided that I owed it to the convention and to myself that its members should be informed by me of the attitude I should take if elected and under such circumstances as would enable the convention to nominate some one else should it prefer to do so after learning my views. Hence, I prepared the 'Gold Telegram' at my desk, without aid or suggestion of any kind from any source either directly or indirectly and in the presence of two friends, who were in my house and helping me, Mr. Arthur McCausland, my secretary and now one of my partners, and Mr. Alvah S. Newcomb, then and now the assistant State reporter."

yond the recognition of existing statutes he had allowed himself in his St. Louis telegram; that he did not dare to adopt the *Evening Post's* hostility to the tariff, or commit himself to a revenue for tariff only, or even to a square demand for any basis of reduction; that he did not dare to commit himself to giving up the Philippines, or to go in any direction beyond President Roosevelt's position. The *Sun* said: "Instead of rising above the platform, Judge Parker has crawled ignominiously beneath it"; adding, "We prefer the impulsive candidate of the party of conservatism to the mildly conservative, temporising opportunist." A humorous writer in *Everybody's Magazine* declared that "Roosevelt, from the Democratic point of view, is rash, sudden, full of usurpation, and an exemplar of personal government, while Judge Parker is the exact opposite. He has been nursed on precedents and authorities. He feeds on year-books and reports and digests. He approaches a subject with tranquil deliberation and an open mind. Inconsecutive thought is not to be expected from him."³

It gradually dawned upon the Democratic managers that Parker's "deliberation in reaching conclusions," and "inherent judicial conservatism" had been overworked; that the multitude of radicals, who had supported the Democratic party under the leadership of Bryan, not only regarded Roosevelt's policies more akin to their own than Parker's, but that many of them, especially in the West, openly supported him. The *Flickertail Flicker*, a popular and much quoted Democratic journal of Goodrich, North Dakota, expressed the sentiment. Writing of the Panama incident, it said (January 18): "That which a lot of dilly-dallying Liliputian statesmen had been wishing to bring about for over half a century, Theodore Roosevelt decided to do and did in less than half a day. People call him erratic, impulsive, but that does not properly describe him. The only difference between him and other statesmen is that Roosevelt will take about one-tenth the time of the

³ July, 1904.

average politician to commit an error of policy or do a great deed." In a delightful interplay between Bryan and Roosevelt at a meeting of the Gridiron Club of Washington, the former charged the President with stealing all his policies and ideas.⁴ With an audacity no less humorous Bryan resented the conservative views of the Parker Constitutional Club. Although he supported the Parker ticket, he kicked harder than he patted. He thought little could be hoped from a Democratic victory so long as the new policy "brought the party under control of the Wall Street element." He also early announced his purpose, as soon as the election was over, "to marshal the friends of popular government within the Democratic party to the support of a radical and progressive policy."

It can easily be understood that such talk worked in favour of the Republicans, although it is doubtful if either party at the time fully realised the great extent of the drift about to be revealed. The situation was most peculiar. The recognised conservative party which had favoured national banks, the payment of the five-twenty bonds in gold, the resumption of specie payment, deflation of the greenback, and the gold standard, had a candidate who advocated reform measures and made no secret of his progressivism, while the head of the party which had supported Bryan and the free-coinage of silver, plainly stood for conservatism. The outcome was inevitable. Radical Democrats preferred Roosevelt or Eugene Debs, the candidate of the Socialist party, while the Republicans, many of whom probably dissented from the President's radicalism, preferred to adhere to their own party.

Conditions for Higgins looked less favourable. Although larger schools, a rapidly growing population, the passage of an eight hour law, the abolition of grade crossings, enlarged charitable institutions, and swollen expenses for the department of agriculture, explained the increase in State expenditures, Governor Odell's opponents charged ex-

⁴ Depew, *Autobiography*, p. 178.

travagance and wanton waste. Finally, Attorney-General Cunneen, a Democrat, indicated something graver than mere extravagance. "If graft exists," asked the Governor, "what has the Attorney-General been doing? He is a member of nearly all the State Boards, and is obliged to pass upon all bills enacted into law. If he has any facts about picking and pilfering why does he not speak out?" To this challenge the Attorney-General stated that in December, 1902, the Furnaceville Iron Company, of which Edward H. Harriman, a friend of the Governor, was president, presented to the Canal Board a claim of \$18,618 for rock-cutting, which the Board disallowed on the ground that the classification of dirt as rock was improper; that in January, 1903, a new Board of which Lieutenant-Governor Higgins and Attorney-General Cunneen were members, reopened and approved the claim, Cunneen alone opposing. The association of the name of Edward H. Harriman, a noted railroad manager, gave wings to the story, embellished with tales of mutual benefits exchanged. From a statement prepared by the State Comptroller, based upon testimony, maps, and other official documents filed in his office, it appeared that the Board of 1902 did not disallow the claim, but referred it to the Board of 1903, who, after taking the testimony of engineers and others, found the material excavated to be "hard-pan," the equivalent of rock under the Company's contract. Cunneen based his disagreement upon the testimony of several unskilled labourers.

In political circles lingering doubts existed. Harriman's fraternisation with the Governor, coupled with Attorney-General Cunneen's disapproving vote, left a shadow. The Democratic State Convention declared that "for the first time in its history the Empire State has a Governor whose personal integrity rests under widespread suspicion." The *New York Times*, a leading Democratic journal, thought it would have been better to omit from the platform the charge against the Governor, since "it has never heard of any act of his which would bring his personal integrity under sus-

picion." Higgins' loyalty to the Governor and his approving vote of the Harriman claim seemed also to bring distrust upon him, dimming the estimable qualities known to his neighbours. The *New York Sun*, though advocating Roosevelt, refused to support Higgins. Its sympathy with Senator Platt reflected the feeling of many influential Republicans, who, if not so outspoken, indicated a disposition to settle without remorse the great account when the time came. Indeed, Senator Scott of the National Committee telephoned the President (October 8) that if the election occurred then Higgins would be defeated; that both committees were out of funds, and that the State Committee needed at least \$200,000 to carry out the plans of the campaign. The President became greatly worried, declaring he would rather lose the election than lose his own State. Soon after Edward H. Harriman, by invitation or otherwise, visited Roosevelt and remedied the financial necessities.⁵ But the feeling toward Higgins remained. Elihu Root, addressing the Union League Club (October 21), declared with unusual emphasis: "There is a serious question about the election of a Governor. Higgins' nomination came to him unsought. He is no man's man. It is a very hard and very cruel thing that he should be borne down by unjust aspersions." The President, also, gave him a cordial endorsement. "You know without my needing to say it, how pleased I am at your nomination. While I was Governor and you were chairman of the Finance Committee of the Senate, we were thrown very closely together, and I have never had the good fortune to be associated with any public servant of higher integrity or of greater administrative ability." Nevertheless, as election day approached, the registered bets stood 2 to 1 against Higgins. As he noticed the wave of despondency invade the party and watched with apprehension the struggle for the governorship, White-law Reid, who carefully measured the influence of the Platt

⁵ Investigation by the U. S. Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, collected evidence, pp. 685-87.

malcontents and the mischief-making capacities of the Mugwumps, wrote to John Hay: "I cannot persuade myself that there can be any serious doubt about the final judgment upon the higgledy-piggledy nondescript array of Falstaffian soldiers attacking the Administration." The day before election Hay thought "there will, of course, be a few small-sized surprises."

In the country-at-large, however, the result astonished the leaders of both parties, Roosevelt receiving 400,000 more votes than McKinley in 1900, and Parker 1,250,000 less than Bryan. Roosevelt's plurality in New York was 175,552 and Higgins' 80,560. Indeed, nothing turned out as the Parker and Herrick managers had planned. Even the Panama coup benefited the President. Although many Republicans, sensitive to the honour of the Government, believed Colombia should be compensated,⁶ a feeling obtained that the construction of the canal justified Roosevelt's action, which his large vote seemed to corroborate. On the other hand, Governor Higgins' vote indicated exceptional weakness.⁷ Indeed, Senator Platt declared that "had it not been a Presidential year Higgins would have been snowed under." His losses in Kings, Queens, and New York counties, in which Herrick's plurality was 41,826 more than Parker's, indicated a snowstorm, especially in Kings, which Roosevelt carried by 1,391 and Higgins lost by 13,460.

In expressing his appreciation of the confidence imposed in him by the American people, Roosevelt said: "On the

⁶ In 1921 the United States paid Colombia \$25,000,000.

⁷ Governor Black ran 32,000 behind President McKinley in 1896 and Gov. Odell 17,000 behind him in 1900. Higgins ran 46,000 behind Roosevelt. Presidential vote in New York: Roosevelt, 859,533; Parker, 683,981; Debs, Socialist, 36,883; Swallow, Prohibition, 20,787; Corrigan, Socialist Labour, 9,127; Watson, Populist, 7,459; Roosevelt's plurality, 175,552. Gubernatorial vote: Higgins, 813,264; Herrick, 732,707; Pandergast, Social Democrat, 36,257; McKee, Prohibition, 20,568; De Leon, Social Labour, 8,976; Boulton, Populist, 6,015; Higgins' plurality, 80,560. The Legislature: Senate, Reps. 35, Dems. 15; Assembly, Reps. 107, Dems. 36, Inds. 7.

4th of March next I shall have served three and a half years, and that three and a half years constitutes my first term. The wise custom which limits the President to two terms regards the substance and not the form, and under no circumstances will I be a candidate for or accept another nomination." A few years later, when he accepted a third nomination, he explained that the anti-third term custom did not extend to an ex-President. He said: "Every shred of power which a President exercises while in office vanishes absolutely when he has once left office. An ex-President stands precisely in the position of any other private citizen. Therefore the reasoning on which the anti-third term custom is based has no application whatever to an ex-President, and no application whatever to anything except consecutive terms. . . . I felt that the substance of the custom applied to me in 1908, but not in the case of one desiring a third term not consecutive."⁸ President Cleveland held otherwise. In his opinion no man ought to seek to disturb the popular usage and unwritten law which prescribes that a third Presidential term, whether or not consecutive, is dangerous to the Republic.⁹

⁸ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 423.

⁹ *New York Tribune*, April 7, 1896.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HOW DEPEW HAPPENED TO SUCCEED HIMSELF

1904-5

As the Republicans had carried both branches of the Legislature in the preceding election, the choice of a United States senator to succeed Depew aroused unusual interest. Platt was ablaze for Depew; Odell, whose power to determine the inclination of the scales was unquestioned, preferred former Governor Black. Thus matters stood until a day or two before the Governor's retirement, when he announced that Depew would have no opposition.

To a large majority of Republicans this edict was undoubtedly satisfactory. For more than forty years he had been every man's friend and constantly at the command of his party. Although content to leave the political management to Platt, and disinclined to be as aggressive and resolute as some others, his good-nature and genius for entertaining speech had made him a general favourite. But the Governor's sudden change, so blighting to Black and exasperating to his friends, called forth a statement from Senator Brackett of Saratoga to the effect that at the Governor's request he joined in an agreement to make him chairman of the State Committee for the purpose of electing Black to the Senate and effecting a general reorganisation of the party. That within a week the Governor had assured him and other friends of Black that the latter had one hundred sure votes. That a day or two later, on a rumour of his weakening, he called again (December 27) with a delegation, when the Governor claimed that Black could not be elected, and although upon a review of the legislative list "it appeared on his own estimate that a clear majority favoured Black," he still persisted in his

claim. Thereupon the delegation declared his assumption a mere subterfuge and insisted upon their right to know what lay behind it. "He finally gave as his only reason," continued the statement, "that it would break one of the dearest friendships of his lifetime should he persist in his support of Black." It was suggested that the bargain to make him chairman and Black senator was not conditioned on Edward H. Harriman's approval, and that a failure to keep his agreement might result in breaking some other friendships. He said, finally, Black would surely be beaten, but he would carry out his agreement. The next day (December 28) came his declaration for Senator Depew.¹

Without in any way referring to Brackett's interview, the Governor said: "A month ago my knowledge of the situation in the State was not as complete as it is at present, and those of my friends who thought a change might be desirable for party reasons must now recognise the sentiment which has manifested itself all over the State so strongly for the return of Senator Depew." Asked if he did not have a personal preference, he replied: "I am but human, and of course I had such a preference. But I was aiming to serve the best interests of the party, and to that end I have been working ever since election day."

Brackett's reference to Edward H. Harriman aroused much comment. "Before the moment came for laying down office," said the *Evening Post*, "Governor Odell's obvious purpose was to proceed in the exhilarating work of having a United States senator of his own. He went into the task with his usual firmness and confidence. . . . But the fact remains that he was forced to back squarely down. The secret of this retreat may never be fully told. But it would be idle to deny that the extended ramifications of the Vanderbilt railroads have been of vast assistance."

In his autobiography, Senator Platt wrote (p. 460): "On December 1, 1904, the Governor, through a friend, announced

¹ New York *Times*, December 30, 1904. New York *Evening Post*, December 31.

that Black was his preference for Depew's seat. He called a conference of his Legislative friends, and afterwards sought to convince me and others that he had Depew whipped. I disputed it. A few days before the caucus, however, there was an earnest talk between the Governor and Edward H. Harriman, who then wielded some power in the financial world. Harriman induced Odell to agree to withdraw his support from Black and get in behind Depew."

But the real cause for Harriman's pressure upon Odell remained a secret until an investigation by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections in 1912 in the matter of campaign contributions. It seems that when Harriman, voluntarily or by request (a much disputed point),² visited President Roosevelt on October 20, 1904, Governor Odell requested him to speak of the ugly revolt against Higgins, the dire need of funds for the State Committee, and the bitter factional fight between the supporters of Black and Depew for the United States Senate. "Bring to the President's attention," wrote Odell, "the fact that the organisation is committed to Black, but that such a kindly feeling exists for Depew that the President's appointment of him as ambassador to France would be highly appreciated and settle the trouble." The President agreed to do this, said Harriman, and the latter agreed to raise \$250,000, which he did. After the election, however, the President changed his mind, preferring that Depew be returned to the Senate. This deeply embarrassed Harriman, who had raised most of the money through Depew's intimate friends, so that nothing remained for him to do except to promote Depew's election by insisting that Odell drop Black.

While the choice was generally satisfactory to Republicans, many objected to the manner of the selection. "Mr. Odell's choice," said the *Buffalo Express*, "will no doubt be ratified by the Legislature. We fear there would have been no doubt of a similar ratification if the Governor's

² Kennan, *Life of Harriman*, Vol. 2, pp. 181-197.

choice had chanced to fall on Frank S. Black. . . . That body might just as well not exist so far as the election of a United States senator is concerned. This situation will undoubtedly give added force to the proposition for the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people." This suggestion called to mind the fact that Depew's secret selection by Platt and Odell in 1899 led to a resolution, adopted by the Democratic State convention of that year, that United States senators be elected by a direct vote of the people, a proposition which had been repeatedly readopted, and which finally became the 17th amendment to the Constitution of the United States on May 31, 1913.

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After the defeat of Judge Parker and the re-election of Senator Depew, Platt disclaimed all management of State affairs; Hill ceased his political activities; Cleveland's restraining influence no longer curbed the Bryan element; and Governor Higgins struggled against factional difficulties and failing health;³ while Roosevelt opened the way for the nomination of Charles E. Hughes for governor in 1906. Although Platt in his prime was a more accomplished boss than Roosevelt, the latter's political instincts enabled him to get on with the old up-state managers until progressive insurgency, displacing the party discipline and organisation which had elected Governor Hughes in 1906 and again in 1908, enabled the Democrats to regain the governorship in 1910 and the Presidency in 1912. Roosevelt's subsequent political ventures were not happy. Yet he remained to the end an impressive, imposing personality, animated by the love of country and of humanity.

³ Higgins died in February, 1907; Cleveland in 1908; Hill and Platt in 1910; and Roosevelt on January 6, 1918.

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